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MAN
OCIAL DEMOCRACY
DURING THE WAR

EDWYN BEVAN

GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY DURING THE WAR

GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY DURING THE WAR

BY

EDWYN BEVAN

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PREFACE

THE aim of this book is to put together in a consecutive narrative the principal events which make up the history of the German Social Democrat Party from the outbreak of the Great War till the elevation of Count Hertling to the Imperial Chancellorship at the beginning of November 1917. Of course any account of German Social Democracy written in England at this period must be—to use a delightful phrase of the late Professor T. K. Cheyne's—"strongly marked with provisionalness." This account is based upon the printed utterances—in papers, pamphlets, and books—of those who have themselves taken part in the events narrated: to that extent it is already possible to have first-hand data. Further, since the war literature produced by the opposing Social Democrat groups consists largely of mutual criticism and polemic, it is often possible to check one mode of representation by another. For a finally satisfactory account to be given, it will no doubt be necessary, not only that first-hand data should be available with regard to the separate facts, but that the person who constructs out of those facts a living whole should himself have been inside the movement and, grasping the inner forces at work, the interplay of personal influences, should select and order the facts in such a way as to exhibit their organic significance. That an English

writer in the fourth year of the war cannot do. Yet the outlines are already established, and one may hope that if such an account as the present one would need a great deal of supplementing in the light of fuller knowledge, it would not need much correction. It seems of great importance that we in England should gain without delay such clearness as is now possible on the part played by Social Democracy during these fateful years in Germany.

A great deal of the material from which the account is derived is still dispersed in newspapers and periodicals (as will be seen by the footnotes), but a few books may be mentioned which have already put some of the material together. For the earlier part of the war we have the account written by a German Social Democrat of the extreme Nationalist wing, Konrad Haenisch, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie in und nach dem Weltkriege* (Berlin, 1916), and a book by Dr. Richard Berger (Catholic "Centrum" Party), *Fraktionsspaltung und Parteikrisis* (München in Gladbach, 1916), referred to as "Berger" in the footnotes—which, although ill-constructed and wooden, is useful in so far as it puts together a certain number of documents. On the other side one may call special attention to Eduard Bernstein's article "Der Riss in der Sozialdemokratie" in *Die Zukunft* of April 21, 1917. One may also mention *La Faillite de l'Internationale,* by Alexandre Zévaès (Paris, 1917), a book written apparently with a strong anti-Socialist bent, and *The Socialist Party in the Reichstag,* by P. G. La Chesnais (Fisher Unwin, 1915). I regret that I did not see, in time to make use of them, Berger's second volume, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie im dritten Kriegsjahr* (1917), or *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie während des Weltkrieges,* a little book, published posthumously,

by the able Minority writer Gustav Eckstein, who died untimely in 1916, a comparatively young man.

* * * * *

A word must be added on the developments which have taken place since November 1917, since, apart from them, a false conclusion might be drawn from the story broken off at that point. My book traces the continuous growth of the anti-war Minority in numbers and influence during thirty-nine months of war. It is important, therefore, to realize that in the subsequent months this process has been suddenly reversed, and it is difficult to say for how much the Minority counts to-day. The explanation seems to be given in the extract with which this book concludes. The Minority grew, not because the German masses cared for "self-determination of nationalities" or "no annexations," or any other ideal principle, but because the bereavements and material discomforts of the war made them want peace above everything else, and the policy of the Minority leaders seemed to promise them peace most speedily. Since November they have been given a peace on the East, a peace of ruthless conquest, a peace which the Pan-Germans acclaim as their own, and the effect has been to draw the masses to the side of the Government. As to the conduct of the Majority leaders in face of the Russian peace, a great deal of sarcasm has been expended upon it. And it must be admitted that they present anything but a heroic figure in the eyes of history. It is a cruel position to have to swallow all your professed principles with the world looking on, to be reduced simply to shrugging the shoulders and saying: "Not, of course, a peace which we approve, but still a peace; and if one nation is going to trample

on another, better that it should be we on the Russians than the Russians on us." But probably they knew that if they had tried to take a stronger line they would have had no considerable body of the people behind them.

May 31, 1918.

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GERMAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY DURING THE WAR

German Social Democracy during the War

I

THE TIME BEFORE THE WAR

It is well known that before the war German Social Democracy formed a community within the country whose relations with the State were little short of hostile. It was a commonplace among Social Democrats that the proletariat had no interest in the existing State, had "nothing to lose except its chains"; and it was a commonplace outside Socialist circles that the Social Democrats were *vaterlandslose Gesellen* ("a crew without a country"). It is less generally realized that in the months immediately preceding the war this hostility had become unusually intensified. There were the after-effects of Zabern; there had been new administrative measures restricting the working people's right of coalition; in the Prussian House of Representatives the Minister of the Interior, von Löbell, had given a rough refusal to consider any projects for electoral reform; an extraordinarily bitter feeling prevailed generally in the Labour world. At the conclusion of the session of the Reichstag, in the early summer of 1914, the Social Democrat members were not satisfied with

Growing enmity between Social Democracy and the State.

leaving the Chamber before *Hochs* were raised for the Kaiser, as they usually did; the bulk of them remained to dissociate themselves more provocatively still from the expression of loyalty.

The party was not, however, really all of one shade. There were a series of gradations of tone, from the Extreme Left, which was uncompromising and revolutionary, to the Extreme Right, which differed little from the Liberal bourgeois imperialists. One may in this scale distinguish five sections:—

The various sections.

1. The Extremists, represented in the Reichstag by Karl Liebknecht, Paul Lensch, and Stadhagen. The veteran historian of German Socialism, Franz Mehring, not himself a member of the Reichstag, represented this section in the sphere of letters. It had also two prominent woman-figures among its leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin. It was for a thorough-going class-war, which was not hampered by too tender a regard for Parliamentarism or the unity of the Party, and did not shrink from resorting to street agitation. It was against the view which advocated co-operation with non-Socialist parties in political work.

2. The Left Centre, whose philosopher was Karl Kautsky, exponent of the pure doctrine of Marx, and editor of the weekly *Die Neue Zeit.* Kautsky, like Mehring, was not in the Reichstag. Heinrich Cunow, one of the editors of *Vorwärts*, was another of those who represented it by their writings. In the Reichstag Hugo Haase and Ledebour were two of its principal figures. It disagreed with the Extremist section in attaching the greatest value to parliamentary action and condemning street demonstrations; on the other hand, like the Extremist section, it disagreed with the

Revisionists in disapproving of the co-operation with the non-Socialist parties.

3. The Right Centre, led by Philipp Scheidemann and Richard Fischer (manager of Vorwärts) adhered theoretically to the traditional Party programme, but was in practice inclined to compromise with the Revisionists.

The Left and Right Centre together constituted numerically the bulk of the Party.

4. The Moderate Revisionists, led by Eduard Bernstein. This section was frankly in favour of abandoning the class-war and co-operating with the non-Socialist Radicals in constitutional activity. "Revisionism" had abandoned the idea of overthrowing capitalist society by a violent revolution, and hoped rather to secure the ends of Social Democracy by a series of successive partial reforms. Dr. Eduard David was among the principal men of this section, and another was Ludwig Frank, a man of exceptional ability and personal charm.

5. The Imperialist Socialists, who supported the demand for a big army and big navy, for colonial expansion, and even Protection. This section was not strong in numbers, but its leading personalities made themselves felt: Kolb of Baden, Dr. Quessel, an enthusiast for colonies, Edmund Fischer, and Wolfgang Heine.

Strength and organization of the Party.

The Social Democrat Party was at the outbreak of the war the largest organized political Party in Germany. Its enrolled members throughout the Empire on March 31, 1914, numbered 1,085,905, including 174,754 women. Over one-third of the total votes given in the Reichstag elections of 1912 were given for Social Democrat members. Amongst the 397 members of the Reichstag, the Social Democrat Group (*Fraktion*) numbered 110.

The Party was organized throughout the country in a large number of local centres; and each State of the Empire had its own particular Social Democrat organization. Once a year, according to the Constitution, there was a Congress (*Parteitag*) to which all the local organizations all over the Empire sent delegates. The members of the Party Group in the Reichstag also attended the *Parteitag, ex officio*. The Congress elected the Directorate (*Vorstand*) of the Party, which comprised a President, a Vice-President, a Treasurer, six Secretaries and two assistants, and the Committee of Control (*Kontrol Commission*) of nine members.[1] For special purposes the *Vorstand* was assisted by the Party Committee (*Ausschuss*), consisting of representatives of the local organizations.

In July 1914 the Joint-Presidents of the Party were Hugo Haase, and Fritz Ebert, and Haase was also President of the Group in the Reichstag. where he sat as a member for Königsberg.

German Social Democracy was distinguished by the volume and the high quality of its Party press, It had a large number of local newspapers and periodicals; the *Hamburger Echo,* the *Chemnitzer Volksstimme,* the *Karlsruher Volksfreund,* the *Breslauer Volkswacht,* the *Münchner Post,* and the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* were among the most influential.

The central daily organ of the Party was *Vorwärts* ("Forward"), published in Berlin, which also served as the special organ of the Berlin branch of the Party. The weekly review, *Die Neue Zeit,* edited by Karl Kautsky, was the intellectual organ of the Party.

[1] For a brief and lucid popular account of German Social Democracy before the war reference may be made to Mr. W. Stephen Sanders' Fabian tract "The Socialist Movement in Germany" (The Fabian Society, 3 Clement's Inn, W. C. 2.).

The *Sozialistische Monatshefte* came out fortnightly. The former had a tendency to the Left, whereas the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* represented the Right wing of the Party—the section of the "Imperialist Socialists" alluded to above. The economist Max Schippel, who cannot really count as a Socialist at all, is a frequent contributor to it.

German Socialist Press condemns Austria.

When the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia in July 1914 brought the danger of war upon Europe, nothing could have rung more bravely than the words with which German Social Democracy denounced the action of the militarist Governments in Germany and Austria:—

They want war, the unscrupulous circles who exercise a determining influence on the Vienna Hofburg. They want war—these weeks past that has been apparent in the wild clamour of the black-and-yellow provocative Press. They want war—the Austrian ultimatum makes it plain and declares it to the whole world. . . .

This ultimatum is so shameless, in its manner as well as in its demands, that any Serbian Government which backed down submissively before such a Note would have to reckon with the possibility of being flung out by a popular mass-movement between dinner and dessert. Of course, even if the Great Serb movement is a part of the South-Slav bourgeois revolution and, as such, has all historical right on its side, as against the *mass of organized corruption* constituting the Habsburg Monarchy (since the break-up of States composed of different nationalities and the creation of homogeneous national States corresponds with the line of historical evolution), still, Socialism cannot find much to commend in a propaganda on the Serbian side, which whips up all the bad instincts of chauvinism, and it must certainly set its face against an agitation which works with bombs and revolvers. So long as the Austro-Hungarian Government confines itself to asking Herr Pashitch to track down the accomplices in the crime of Serajevo on Serbian soil and

bring them to justice, it is certainly within its rights. But as the Serbian Premier has himself declared, such a request would be met to the fullest extent by the Belgrade authorities. It is because the war-party in Vienna do not desire a peaceful solution that Berchtold's note is couched in quite another tone. . . .

It was a crime of the chauvinist Press in Germany that it goaded on Germany's dear ally in his warlike passions to the utmost, and unquestionably Herr von Bethmann Hollweg has himself promised Herr Berchtold to stand behind him. But the game they are playing in Berlin is as dangerous as that played in Vienna . . . (*Vorwärts*, July 25, 1914).

The Directorate of the German Social Democrat Party issued on the same day an "Appeal," in which it said:—

No drop of a German soldier's blood must be sacrificed to the Austrian despots' lust for power, to imperialist commercial interests. Comrades, we call upon you to express immediately in mass-meetings the unshakable will for peace of the class-conscious proletariat. . . . The ruling classes, who in peace-time oppress you, despise you, exploit you, want to use you as cannon-fodder. Everywhere the cry must ring in the despots' ears: "We want no war! Down with war! Long live international brotherhood!"

On the following day (July 26), after the Austrian declaration of war on Serbia, *Vorwärts* wrote that the one comfort was that Germany was not pledged to support Austria in a step which Austria had taken without German concurrence.

The German proletariat must insist that this view, prevalent at the moment, remains the permanent view, and that Germany refuses emphatically, if it is asked later on, to get Austria out of this mess. . . . It is a question whether the other Powers, and especially Russia, will remain passive spectators if big Austria throttles little Serbia. . . . The gigantic German armaments have caused England, France,

and Russia to follow suit to such an extent that . . . the detonation of the electrical tension, which has become more and more explosive from year to year, is only too much to be feared.

The paper goes on to speak of the "complete absence of direction in the German Government."

It is not the first time that amongst us a war-party and a peace-party are engaged in struggle. . . . For the preservation of peace and the avoidance of the most wicked and fatal conflicts between the peoples, the proletariat must throw into the scale all its political maturity and all its organizing power! The international situation is as confused as ever. The Governments incline more than ever to the policy which stakes all on the hazard. The Austrian Government has lost all its reason and is plunging desperately into the Serbian adventure. The German Government is obviously not unanimous, is divided and without direction. Who knows what struggles are going on behind the scenes between William *senior* and William *junior* and their respective followings? . . .

Haase goes to see the Chancellor, July 26, 1914.

On the same day on which these words appeared in *Vorwärts,* Hugo Haase, the President of the Social Democrat Party, and Ebert were summoned to the Prussian Ministry of the Interior. Ebert being at the moment away from Berlin, Haase chose Adolf Braun instead to accompany him. Certain other prominent men of the Party who might naturally have accompanied him (Scheidemann, Molkenbuhr) were also out of Berlin and too far away to be telegraphed for. The government had learnt that the Party was getting up a number of public meetings to protest against war, and wished to caution the leaders as to the things which might and might not be said. In the course of this interview, the officials told Haase that if Russia attacked Austria-Hungary,

Germany would stand by Austria. Haase replied by referring to a speech of Eduard David's in the Reichstag, in which David had stated that the Social Democrat Party regarded Germany's alliance with Austria as purely defensive. If Austria, he said, began by declaring war on Serbia, the war for Austria and Germany would not be a defensive one. The official reply was simply that this view was not the one taken by any Party in the Empire except the Social Democrat.[1]

Next day (July 27) *Vorwärts* announces that twenty-seven mass-meetings are to take place in Berlin to show the rulers the people's resolute will for peace.

Meetings in Germany against the war, July 27–30.

On the 28th it welcomes the British proposal for mediation by Great Britain, France, Germany, and Italy, "a fair and acceptable (*billig*) proposal for all parties."

> Our Russian comrades have given an emphatic enough declaration of their view to the Tsardom, and they will let their autocracy have it strong if it goes about to throw itself into a worse military adventure than the mad enterprise in the Farther East. But it is rash, for all that, so to rely upon the revolutionary movement as to goad the power of Tsardom and Panslavism to extremities—no inconsiderable power, after all—by encouraging Austria to plunge along the road of the wildest provocation. *It is not in Tsardom, at the present moment, that the worst danger of war lies, but in misguided Austria.*

The twenty-seven mass-meetings took place duly in Berlin on July 28, and passed a resolution beginning: "Austria by its brutal ultimatum has declared war on Serbia. . . ." The resolution called on the German

[1] These facts were stated by Haase on September 22, 1916, at the *Reichskonferenz*.

Government to keep clear of all military intervention. Similar demonstrations took place all over the German Empire during the five days from July 26 to July 30 inclusive—in Barmen, Breslau, Brunswick, Chemnitz, Danzig, Düsseldorf, Duisburg, Elberfeld-Barmen, Essen, Frankfurt-on-Main, Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Gotha, Halle, Hamburg, Hanover, Jena, Kiel, Cologne, Königsberg, Ludwigshafen, Mannheim, Munich, Nürnberg, Stettin, Stuttgart, and Cannstatt.

On July 29 *Vorwärts* criticized adversely the attitude of Germany towards the British proposal for a conference. "To the mobilization of the Powers," it declared heroically, "there is but one possible answer—the permanent mobilization of the people."

Meeting of the I.S.B. in Brussels, July 29 and 30.

A meeting of the International Socialist Bureau took place at Brussels on July 29 and 30, which was attended by delegates from France, Holland, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Poland, Switzerland, Denmark, and Spain. Hugo Haase himself was one of the German delegates. On July 29 he spoke at an "International Meeting against the War" in Brussels. He said that the guilt for the war *rested upon Austria alone,* and he added:—

> It seems that Austria wishes to count upon Germany, but the German Socialists declare that secret treaties to not bind the proletariat. The German proletariat declares that Germany must not intervene, *even if Russia intervenes.* . . . The French proletarians think as we do. Let our enemies beware! It may be that the peoples, wrathful at so much misery and oppression, will awake at last and establish the Socialist order of society. Yesterday, at Berlin, thousands and thousands of proletarians protested against war with cries of "Long live peace! Down with war!"

On the motion of the German delegates, the International Socialist Committee decided, with the warm approval of the French delegates, to summon an International Socialist Congress to meet in Paris on August 9. The German delegates returned to Berlin on July 31.

German and foreign Trade Unions.

Whilst Haase was in Brussels, Carl Legien, the German Trade Union leader and President of the International Federation of Trade Unions, had sent telegrams to the Trade Union Federations in the several countries, inviting them to declare their attitude towards the crisis. A few days before (on July 25) Legien had had a conversation in Brussels with two French Socialists—Jouhaux and Dumoulin—and the Secretary of the Belgian *Commission Syndicale,* in which he had himself been interrogated. According to the account of the interview published later on by Jouhaux,[1] Legien was asked repeatedly what the German Comrades intended to do in order to obviate war, and could not be induced to reply. To his own interrogations he now received answers expressing the determination to oppose war. Amongst these answers was one from London, dated July 31, and signed by Mr. W. A. Appleton, assuring Legien that British Trade Unionists would do their utmost to support the efforts being made by German Comrades for the preservation of peace.

Kriegszustand, July 31.

On the same day, July 31, the German Empire was declared to be on a war-footing (*in Kriegszustand*). Instantly it was seen how much the stout words of the German Social Democrats were worth when it was a question of action. The further meetings of protest which

[1] *La Bataille Syndicaliste,* September 26, 1914

had been arranged for were simply wiped off the slate, by order of the authorities. The Social Democrat newspapers ceased to write about the wickedness of Austria. They could only get gratification in retrospect from the strong language they had used before July 31, and from the assurance of their own righteousness; they could only repeat over and over again that, if war came, they at any rate had protested against it; they at any rate bore none of the responsibility. Apparently, among the rank and file of the party, some found it hard to accomplish the rapid transition to self-effacement: on August 1 *Vorwärts* inserts an editorial admonition to all Comrades to lie low; they must cherish their old convictions in their breasts, but they must also take care how they give utterance to these convictions in speech.

This purely negative behaviour was a somewhat poor substitute for a "permanent mobilization of the people" against war. But German Social Democracy was not allowed to remain at the negative point. By August 4 it was actually voting credits in the Reichstag for the war which, according to its solemn warnings of July 29, was going to encounter the solid opposition of the German proletariat.

II

THE FOURTH OF AUGUST

THE voting of the credits asked for by the Government did not come easy to German Social Democracy.

Is the Social Democrat Group to vote war-credits?

We have many testimonies to the agonies and searchings of heart through which Comrades passed in those fateful days. It was announced that the Government would ask the Reichstag on August 4 to vote war-credits to the amount of 5,000,000,000 marks. The Social Democrat group in the Reichstag had to decide what its action at this juncture should be. The group, as has been stated, consisted of 110 members, under the presidency of Hugo Haase. A meeting of the Group was called for August 3 to consider the momentous dilemma.

After receiving the report of what had happened at the Brussels meetings, the Directorate of the German

Mission of Herman Müller to Paris.

Social Democrat Party had dispatched an emissary to Paris, Hermann Müller, one of its own members. According to his own statement, the object of his mission was to communicate to the French Socialists that the German Directorate thought it impossible, in view of the strained situation, for the Congress of the International Socialist Bureau to take place on August 9 in Paris, as had been arranged in Brussels. He was not sent, as Südekum erroneously told the Italians some

months later, to represent German Social Democracy at the funeral of Jaurès: the murder of Jaurès was not known in Germany when he left. But it may be believed that the real object of his mission was to ascertain what the French Socialists were going to do in the matter of voting war-credits and to arrange, if possible, for parallel action in the two countries. At the meeting of the Directorate which empowered Müller to go as the emissary of German Social Democracy to France, Richard Fischer had spoken as follows:—

> From my Socialist standpoint I cannot conceive in any case our voting the credits, but if the Russians break into the country, I shall find myself placed in a difficult position. In that case I could not well refuse the credits. I should therefore decide for simple abstention from voting (*Stimmenthaltung*).[1]

Müller with difficulty made his way to Paris in a motor-car. The French Parliamentary Socialist Group were in session at the Palais Bourbon on August 1, and had had no expectation of the coming of the German Comrade, when he dropped upon them as a bolt from the blue. He was accompanied by two Belgians—Camille Huysmans, Secretary of the International Socialist Bureau, and Henri de Man. Huysmans acted as interpreter. The French Socialists received Müller with warm cordiality.[2] Müller

[1] Haase's speech at the *Reichskonferens*, September 22, 1916.

[2] Südekum told the Italians he had been badly received, "in an unheard-of fashion," but Müller himself corrected this statement: "Alle französischen Genossen, mit denen ich anlässlich meines kurzen Aufenhalts in Paris kurz vor Kriegsanbruch zusammen war, sind mir in der gleichen herzlichen Weise entgegengekommen wie in früheren Jahren" (*Vorwärts*, November 4, 1914).

told them that there were two strands of opinion in the German Social Democrat Party: some were for voting against the war-credits, others were for abstention from voting. As to voting *for* the war-credits—that, Müller repeated, was out of the question: *"Dass man für die Kriegskredite stimmt, das halte ich für ausgeschlossen."* The French Socialists told him that if France were attacked, the alternatives for them would be different; they would feel that the only two possible courses were either abstention or voting for the war credits. It seemed, therefore, that abstention was the only policy which offered the hope of common action to the Socialists of the two countries. He himself—so Müller told the French Comrades—was in favour of the German Party voting *against* the war-credits; and he gave them to understand that this was the view of the majority of German Social Democrats; if, however, the French took the line of abstention, the German Party would probably decide to do the same, so as to preserve conformity of action. Yet he warned the French Socialists that he could only speak for what had been in the mind of the German Comrades two days before; he did not know what changes had come up in Germany during two days. When he took his leave of the French Comrades to return to Berlin, it had been made clear that no engagement had been taken on either side; the Party in each country was free to act as might seem best to it; only it was hoped that the French and German Socialists would now have a clearer understanding of each other's mind. Müller arrived back in Berlin in time to communicate what had happened in Paris to the German Social Democrat Party before the fateful meeting of August 3.

How a change came in the minds of German Socialists.

In a letter written by one Social Democrat member to another, and subsequently made public, we may see the working of the new emotions upon the old professions in the hours which preceded that meeting:—

On August 3 Dittmann and I travelled from Dortmund to Berlin to attend the Party meeting on that day, at which the question of voting the war-credits was to be decided. . . . I shall never forget the crowded incidents of those days. I saw reservists join the colours and go forth singing Social Democrat songs! Some Socialist reservists I knew said to me: "We are going to the front with an easy mind, because we know the Party will look after us if we are wounded, and that the Party will take care of our families if we don't come home." Just before the train started for Berlin, a group of reservists at the station said to me: "König, you're going to Berlin, to the Reichstag: think of us there: see to it that we have all we need: don't be stingy in voting money." In the train I told Dittmann what a deep impression all this had made upon me. Dittmann confessed that things had happened to him, too, which affected him in the same way. For hours, as the train carried us towards Berlin, we discussed the whole situation, what our attitude should be to national defence, whether the Party would vote the credits. We came to the final conclusion that the Party was absolutely bound to vote the credits, that, if any difference of opinion came up in the meeting, that was the line we should have to take. Dittmann wound up by saying: "The Party could not act otherwise. It would rouse a storm of indignation among men at the front and people at home against the Social Democrat Party if it did. The Socialist organization would be swept clean away by popular resentment."[1]

The meeting of August 3, 1914.

On August 3 the Imperial Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, received in private conference the leaders of the Reichstag Groups. The Social Democrat Group was represented by Haase, Scheidemann, and Molkenbuhr.[2] On the

[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* May 5, 1916.

[2] Haase's speech of September 22, 1916.

same day the critical meeting of the Reichstag Social Democrat Group took place. The case between Austria and Serbia, concerning which the Party press had been so eloquent a few days before, was hardly mentioned—so Eduard Bernstein tells us, who was present.[1] The one fact which now eclipsed everything else was that the Russians were on the soil of the Fatherland. Tsardom, according to the tradition in Social Democrat circles, was the darkest of horrors. The old leaders of the Party had spoken of a war with Russia as one which German Social Democrats might wage with the consciousness of fighting in the cause of liberty and civilization against Asiatic barbarism. And now, whatever the origin of the war, German Social Democrats had to make an instant decision whether they would stand by and see German towns and villages overrun by (as they imagined) semi-savage hordes. Also, from what was then known of the diplomatic transactions leading up to war, it was believed universally in Germany that Russia and France had at the last moment opened hostilities without necessity. Bernstein tells us that he himself was under this impression at the time. According to a story told later on by Wendel, a member of the Reichstag Group, to the Belgian Socialists, certain members of the Party had been shown by a member of the German Government some days before a number of secret documents, which purported to prove that an understanding existed between France and Belgium to allow French troops to attack Germany by marching through Belgium. If Wendel's story is true, the members in question did not pass on their information to the

[1] C. Grünberg, "Die Internationale und der Weltkrieg" (Leipzig, 1916), No. 57, p. 70.

Group as a whole, since Liebknecht, who was present at the meeting, told the Belgians that he had heard nothing about these secret documents, nor knew, indeed, anything about the German violation of Belgian neutrality till the Chancellor announced it the following day in the Reichstag. It is possible, however, that dark communications had taken place between the Government and some of the more Nationalist Social Democrats, which these latter did not divulge, but on the strength of which they made themselves active advocates of the policy of voting the credits at the meeting of the Group.

This much is certain. Under the stress of the hour, the majority of the Group on August 3 were for doing what had seemed to Hermann Müller, when he left Berlin on July 31, to be *ausgeschlossen* (out of the question), for voting the war-credits.

The duty of defending the Fatherland was recognized on principle by all the members of the Group, except four—Liebknecht, Rühle, Henke, and Herzfeld —who declared the expression "defence of the Fatherland" to be a "misleading phrase" (*Verwirrungsphrase*).[1]

Besides these four *intransigeants*, a minority, acting on the advice given by Karl Kautsky, contended, even with the Russians on German soil, that Social Democracy would stultify the position it had taken up, of being free from all responsibility for the war, if it voted the credits. Some one suggested that the Group might do as Müller had led the French Socialists to believe they would do, as Bebel and the elder Liebknecht had done in 1870, simply abstain from voting at all. But it was held that the action of the Group when it had consisted of two men could hardly serve

[1] *Vossische Zeitung*, March 13, 1916, evening.

as a precedent for the Group when it consisted of 110. Then, at least, it was urged, do not vote the credits unconditionally. Use the juncture to extort a promise from the Government that it will not employ the power of Germany for making any fresh annexations. But how, it was replied, could the Government tie itself beforehand, in view of all the unknown possibilities of a war? Yet Social Democracy, the other side argued, must put some conditions to its vote; it must not give the Government a blank cheque. But supposing the Government simply refused the conditions prescribed by the Group, what then? The Social Democrats would then have put themselves in a position in which they would be bound to refuse the credits. At last the question was put. Seventy-eight were for voting the credits unconditionally, fourteen were against. The President, Hugo Haase, voted with the Minority.

The question now confronted the Minority of fourteen whether, on the following day in the Reichstag, they would separate themselves from the rest of the Group and refuse, as an isolated little body of men, to vote the credits. They decided that the right course at present was to maintain the unity of the Party as towards those without and subordinate their public action to the will of the majority. This meant that Haase, although he was against voting the credits, would, as President of the Group, have to read out in the Reichstag the Group's declaration that it supported the Government. He made it obvious that the office was a very distasteful one to him. But he was under the necessity of accepting it—"like a coy maiden reluctant against an embrace," a Social Democrat of the Majority, Wolfgang Heine, wrote of him injuriously some months later.

Amongst those who were in favour of voting the credits was Eduard Bernstein. When the meeting was over Haase engaged him in conversation, and they continued their talk in the Tiergarten.

The two men will play a principal part in the story which follows, and we may look at them more closely as they hold converse on this critical summer afternoon of August 1914. Both belong to the Hebrew race. Haase is a lawyer, born in Prussia in 1863, a smallish man with a bushy moustache. His personality does not give an impression of great power; it may be that he lacks the will to push forward and assert himself, which is usually necessary to the magnetism of a great leader. But men feel in listening to him that he has a clear mind, and that he is essentially an honest man. And to have held fast to simple honesty, in an atmosphere of vehement misrepresentation, may give some men a high place in history, who lacked gifts that can properly be called brilliant. Eduard Bernstein, a man of sixty-four, with his long beard, has the appearance of a benevolent sage. He belonged to the opposite wing of the Party to Haase, being, as has been said, the principal exponent in German Social Democracy of the "Revisionist" policy. He was the son of an engine-driver and educated in business. In the time of the anti-Socialist laws he lived abroad as an exile (from 1888 to 1901), and much of this time was spent in London. He has a sympathetic understanding of England possessed by few Germans, and he contributed before the war, to English periodicals—to *The Nation* in latter years. There is an atmosphere about him of kindly humanitarian Internationalism, and even his enemies cannot question his goodness of heart. He represents one

of the divisions of Breslau in the Reichstag, and is well known as a writer on topics connected with Socialism.

Although Bernstein belonged to the opposite wing of the Party, some observations which he had let fall at the meeting had given Haase the hope of bringing him to the side of the Minority. "What I am more afraid of than anything else in connexion with this resolution," Haase said as they walked in the Tiergarten, "is the after-effect it will have on the development of the Party." Later events brought back the words to Bernstein's mind.

August 4 came, and Haase read out the Group's declaration in the Reichstag. It endeavoured to reconcile the desire of the Party, to divest itself of all responsibility for the war, with the action of the Party, in voting war-credits, by emphatically and solemnly, after the precedent of Pilate, disclaiming the Party's responsibility in words:—[1]

"The Fourth of August."

We are confronted by an hour big with fate. The consequences of the Imperialist policy by which an epoch of com-

[1] Later on Haase himself came to judge the action in a light which assimilates it to Pilate's. In his speech at the *Reichskonferenz* (September 1916), he said: "In the declaration of August 4, it is indeed stated that we do not take on ourselves responsibility for the war. But that is to make words compensate for actions. The action was voting the credits. It is an absurdity to try to get rid of the responsibility with words, only in order to assume it by actions." ("In der Erklärung vom 4 August steht ja, dass wir die Verantwortung für den Krieg nicht übernehmen. Das sind aber Worte gegenüber der Tat, und die Tat war die Abstimmung. Es ist ein Widersinn, die Verantwortung mit Worten ablehnen zu wollen und sie schliesslich durch die Tat zu übernehmen.")

petitive armaments was brought in, and the antagonisms between the nations accentuated, have broken upon Europe like a deluge. The responsibility for this rests upon those who maintained this policy: we disclaim it. . . .

For our people and its peaceful development, much, if not everything, is at stake, in the event of the victory of Russian despotism, which has stained itself with the blood of the best of its own people. Our task is to ward off this danger, to safeguard the civilization (*Kultur*) and the independence of our own country. And here we make good what we have always emphatically affirmed: we do not leave the Fatherland in the lurch in the hour of danger. . . .

With regard to the absence in the declaration of any reference to the German violation of Belgium, it must be remembered that, when the members of the Reichstag assembled on August 4, nothing was yet generally known about the German ultimatum to Belgium, nor was it known that German troops had crossed the Belgian frontier. It was the Chancellor in his speech who revealed to the House the "wrong" which had been committed. By then the Social Democrat Group had already handed in the text of its resolution to the President of the House. Perhaps if there had been more time for consideration, the Chancellor's staggering disclosure might have led the Social Democrat Group to reconsider its resolution of the day before as to voting the credits. As it was, bewildered by the surge of events, they decided, after deliberating for two hours on the new fact, that they must carry out what had been arranged.[1]

All the Group gave their votes for the war-credits —all of them, even Karl Liebknecht. No sign was shown the public of the sharp division of opinion

[1] This detail of the two hours' deliberation was made public in a speech by Grenz at the Würzburg Congress on October 16, 1917.

which had agitated the Group the day before behind closed doors. Or rather, one member, Kunert of Halle, absented himself for a moment whilst the voting took place. His absence was not noticed. It was not till months afterward that he proclaimed the fact, and stated that he had absented himself for reasons of principle.

Dr. Ludwig Frank, who has been mentioned as one of the finest personalities in German Social Democracy, immediately after the meeting of the Reichstag, volunteered for active service and went to the front as a private. He was killed shortly afterwards at Baccarat in France, the first member of the Reichstag to fall in the war. When the Reichstag re-assembled in December, his empty place was marked by a laurel wreath. The death of Frank gave a new consecration to the national cause in the feelings of German Social Democrats.

III

BURGFRIEDE

(LATE SUMMER, 1914)

Peace between German Social Democracy and the State.

THE expectation that, in the event of war breaking out, German Social Democrats would take their stand in opposition to their own Government, that they would proclaim the much-talked-of general strike and otherwise paralyse the militarist authorities, had been entertained in different quarters abroad. So strong was that anticipation that at the outbreak of war, in August 1914, the report ran through the foreign press that Karl Liebknecht, who, as a matter of fact, as we have seen, had given his vote on August 4 for the war-credits, had raised the standard of revolt and been put to death by the German Government! But it was not only abroad that similar expectations had been rife. In Germany itself many circles had perpetually denounced the Social Democrats as destitute of all patriotism, and there had been widespread uneasiness as to what the Social Democrats would really do if the emergency ever came. When, therefore, on August 4 the Reichstag Social Democrat Group declared, through Haase's mouth, that German Social Democrats would not leave the country in the lurch, when it voted in a body the credits asked for by the Government, there was a great revulsion

of joy. The unity of the country seemed almost too good to be true. The Emperor, whose language about the Social Democrats had not always been of an emollient kind before the war, had already on August 1 made the announcement which has since then been so often quoted in Germany: "Henceforth I know no parties any more." The boycott of Social Democrat local branches established by the military authorities ceased; the ban upon the circulation of Social Democrat literature in the army was removed at the end of August; Prussian Ministers and Chiefs of Police paid complimentary visits to Social Democrat institutions. In Würtemberg, for the first time, a Social Democrat was given the post of High School teacher. Permission was given for the official organ of the Party, *Vorwärts,* to be sold among other newspapers in the railway stations. All legal proceedings already instituted against Trade Unions were dropped; the Government gave a promise that the reactionary electoral system in Prussia should be reformed at some future date. For this new attitude of the Government to Social Democracy and democratic reform, the catchword of *Neuorientierung* came later on into vogue. It seems first to have been used in November 1914 by the Secretary of State for the Interior, Dr. Clemens Delbrück.

The Social Democrats, on their side, gave the Government indispensable help in dealing with the internal economic difficulties created by the war. The Trade Unions, and other Labour organizations, which, although they did not coincide with the political Social Democrat Party, had a large number of members in common, and co-operated according to predefined arrangements, now put their administra-

tive machinery and a large part of their funds at the Government's disposal for coping with distress, with the claims of soldiers' dependents, with the dislocation of the labour market. The moment the war broke out the Trade Unions put an end to all the strikes and lock-outs which were in process.

Another service which German Social Democracy rendered to the German Government at this time was to send missions to the Socialists of those neutral countries whose attitude to Germany threatened to become hostile. If the Socialists in these countries, or a considerable number of them, were won over to the German view of the war, that would no doubt give Germany a hold upon each country itself. In September 1914 a member of the Party was sent to carry on an active campaign of propaganda amongst the Italian Socialists. The person chosen was Südekum, a Comrade of somewhat worldly stamp, well-groomed, intriguing, and not too scrupulous. He went about addressing meetings in different Italian towns. According to reports in Rome, the arguments of Südekum were reinforced by the threat that, unless the Italian Comrades worked hard to keep Italy neutral, the financial help sent to the Italian Socialist body by German Social Democracy would be withheld. In any case the reception given Südekum by the Italian Socialists was not of a kind to encourage him. Südekum went on a similar mission to Roumania. In this case a German Social Democrat organ is said definitely to have alleged that he went as an emissary of the German Government.[1] The Roumanian, Albert Prahovan, asserts that Süde-

[1] Official Bulletin of the Stuttgart Social Democrat organization, quoted by Zévaès, "La Faillite de l'Internationale," p. 87.

kum secured the opposition of the Roumanian Socialists to a war-policy by a liberal distribution of money. Whether this is true or not, the few Roumanian Socialists are of a negligible quantity.[1]

The envoy sent to Bulgaria was a Russian named Helphand, a refugee in Germany, where before the war he had worked with the extreme Left of German Social Democracy, and assumed for his public activities the name of "Parvus." Between the Russian abortive revolution of 1905, in which Helphand took part, and the outbreak of this war, he spent some time in Turkey, where he had close relations with the Young Turks, and made a handsome fortune by speculations in corn. On the outbreak of the war he threw himself with zeal into the German cause. He went not only to Sofia to gain the adherence of the Bulgarian Socialists, but also to Constantinople, where he knew the ground, and here came into touch with a Russian refugee Socialist, whom he tried to persuade to get up a revolution in the Caucasus against the Russian Government. M. Grégoire Alexinsky, in a letter published in *L'Humanité* (October 3, 1915), accused him roundly of being an *agent provocateur* in the pay of the German and Turkish Governments.[2] The organ of the Russian refugee Socialists in Paris (*Nasha Slovo*) warned Comrades against having anything to do

[1] *La Roumanie en armes* (Paris, 1915).

[2] On August 28, 1917, Helphand published in the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung* a denial of this: "All the assertions that I ever occupied in Turkey an official or semi-official post, that I am in the service or the pay of the Turkish or Austrian or German General Staff, that my political or literary activity has ever in any way, direct or indirect, been dependent upon any official institution or personality, are base and dirty libels."

with him. In the spring of 1915 he took up his residence in Copenhagen, where he lives, it is said, in sumptuous style. In the summer of the same year he started a new German Social Democrat periodical, *Die Glocke* ("The Bell"), of which Conrad Haenisch, one of the able young men of the Party, a Member of the Prussian Landtag, took over the editorship, and to which many other of the principal Social Democrat writers of the Imperialist wing—Lensch, Jansson, Winnig—are regular contributors.

The envoy chosen for the Swedish Social Democrats was again Südekum; for Holland it was Scheidemann. Attempts were even made through Auer, one of the leading members of the Social Democrat Party in Bavaria, to induce the Socialists in the occupied districts of France to give assistance to the Germans. The Socialist *maire* of Roubaix, M. Lebas, has described Auer's overtures to him, and how, when he proved obdurate, he was charged with high treason and thrown into a German prison.[1]

Later on a still more astonishing attempt was made through Südekum to seduce French prisoners from their allegiance to their national Government. They were allowed to slip back into France on the understanding that they would carry on a subterranean propaganda amongst French Socialists for a German peace. We have the account published by Sergeant Réné Tison (302nd Regiment of the Line) of his interview with Südekum at Metz in January 1915; he was provided with 600 francs and a false Belgian passport.[2]

[1] *L'Humanité*, January 20, 1916.
[2] Zévaès, pp. 145, 146.

This strange co-operation between the old antagonists, Government and Social Democracy, was part of the general cessation of party feuds all over the country—of what was called the *Burgfriede,* the Civil Peace. The whole German people during the first month or two of the war was in a state of unnatural exaltation, in which former habits of thought and feeling were temporarily inhibited by one all-mastering emotion. The victorious sweep of the German armies through Belgium and France, the tremendous defeat of the Russians at Tannenberg, seemed to mean that the war was going to be a short and intense episode, during which the various interests of the different parties and classes might well remain in abeyance. All decisions seemed to have been taken out of the hands of politicians and social theorists into those of the Destiny ruling the battle-field. It was no good to think of social reconstruction in the rush of events.[1]

The first weeks of war.

[1] "At the time when the German armies were pressing forward in the rapid march of victory through Belgium and Northern France, when Hindenburg was dealing the Russians stunning blows in East Prussia, our Majority politicians felt no doubts as to an overwhelming German victory. The English sea-dominion shattered, Russia thrust back beyond the line of the Narev, Mitteleuropa constituted from Tornea-Elf to Lugano, from Calais to the Persian Gulf—all these things they saw as already established facts. But if this was so, if history as a matter of fact was taking this course, then it was mere folly to be lachrymose or peevish and resist the brazen tramp of history, for the sake of fine-drawn Socialist theorizings. Because—so Cunow proclaimed—the right is always on the side of history, not on that of the constructor of historical theory, who wants to force his own arbitrary laws upon history. Moreover, the fact of the overwhelming victory offered the Majority various chances which might be usefully turned to account. The war would create a gigantic economic boom,

which would expedite the rise of the German working-class. Also, it was thought, the more 'patriotic' the working-class had shown itself during the war, the fewer unpleasantnesses it had caused the Government and the *bourgeoisie* in the carrying out of their plans, the easier it would be to get round the governing classes after the war, the less able would they be to refuse the social and political demands of the working-class" (H. Ströbel, in *Die Neue Zeit* for September 15, 1916, pp. 674, 675).

IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE OPPOSITION

(AUTUMN 1914)

Hopes of a rapid triumph fade.

THE battle of the Marne destroyed the possibility of a lightning triumph for Germany. But the battle of the Marne was not at first realized in Germany as a defeat. As represented to the German people, it seemed only a momentary check; the German armies were only pausing, in the language of Professor Adolf Harnack, to gather strength for a fresh advance. Then, as the weeks went on, and the German armies still remained stationary on the Aisne, the grim reality of a long and wearing war began slowly to dawn upon the German people through the rainbow mists of illusion. The fourteen members of the Social Democrat Reichstag Group, who had indeed on August 4 helped to vote the war-credits, but had on August 3 voted against voting them, began to recover breath. Now that the war was beginning to lose its halo of glory, there seemed a chance for agitation.

Karl Kautsky.

Some of the prominent representatives of German Social Democracy in the literary field were disposed to regard "the policy of the Fourth of August" as an apostasy. Karl Kautsky is an instance. Not being himself a member of the Reichstag, he had taken no part in the critical voting of August 3, except by the advice he had

given, not to vote the credits. Born at Prague in 1854, of Czech blood, Kautsky is one of the most prolific writers of German Social Democracy. A writer of some sympathy with Social Democracy describes Kautsky as a doctrinaire of the old school. "He is the very type of the theoretical Radical, who has learnt nothing and forgotten nothing since he came out of the hands of his master, Karl Marx. If he lives for another hundred years he will always go on saying the same thing in new writings, till he is at length left, the last faithful witness of a great vanished age, to carry on a lonely conversation with himself." [1] Yet, whatever may be said by critics, it remains true that Kautsky had been the dominant mind of German Social Democracy in recent years. No one has expounded the principles of Socialism with such authority and such extensive knowledge. It told heavily against the official leaders that Karl Kautsky condemned their action. In spite, however, of Kautsky's adverse judgment on the policy adopted by the Party, it seemed to him at the beginning of the war (so it is affirmed in a publication from the Majority side) [2] that the maintenance of Party unity was a consideration overriding all others. If this is so, the process of events at any rate led him to take up a different attitude.

The Party Press.

A still more extreme position was taken by the historian of German Social Democracy, Franz Mehring. He is now an old man of seventy-two, a scholar and recluse, with a vigorous and bitter pen. Early in the war he started, in collaboration with the *intransigeante*

[1] Friedrich Naumann, in *Die Hilfe* (July 1, 1915).

[2] "Für die Einheit der Partei," published by the Party Directorate.

woman-Socialist, Rosa Luxemburg, a new periodical, *Die Internationale,* but the Government suppressed it after the appearance of its first number. The second number, Comrades were assured, would appear immediately upon the conclusion of peace.[1] The leaders of the main body of German Social Democracy themselves became conscious that they must think out their policy more clearly. In November 1914 the editors of the Social Democrat newspapers met for the first time since the beginning of war in conference. The following principles were laid down for the guidance of the Party Press:—

1. The Party Press should work against Jingoism and the wilder sort of patriotism.

2. It should fight against the lust to grab more territory [though, as we shall see, many Social Democrat leaders were prepared to admit certain annexations as desirable].

3. In reproducing accounts of atrocities and of the ill-usage of prisoners and wounded on the part of the enemy, it should aim at the greatest possible measure of "objectivity"—i.e. should try to avoid false reports and exaggerations.

4. It should be alert and constructive in the sphere of social and economic policy.[2]

The Central organ of the Party in the Press, the Berlin *Vorwärts,* tried at first to maintain a non-committal attitude between the official policy of the Party and the views of the Opposition. But before long it became plain that those directing the editorial staff of the paper were mainly in sympathy with the Opposition, and although contributions from the

[1] Berger, p. 81.

[2] "Junius" in *Die Neue Rundschau* for December 1917, p. 1720.

Social Democrat Majority continued to appear in *Vorwärts,* the curious anomaly came to exist that the Central organ of the Party kept up in its editorial articles a persistently adverse criticism of the policy of the party.

Hugo Haase.

We have seen that Hugo Haase, who was President both of the Reichstag Group and of the Party as a whole, had voted against the policy of the Majority on August 3. His influence was now thrown into the scale of the Opposition. The same writer from whom a description of Kautsky was quoted just now says of Haase: "There is a basis of East-Prussian Radicalism in him, modified by a sensitiveness to Socialist opinion in neutral countries. The reproaches of these foreign Socialists do not affect the mass of Social Democrats in Germany, but the President of the Party is necessarily in a somewhat different position. It rests upon him mainly to keep the connexion with foreign Socialism in being. There is a suggestion of pessimism in his attitude. He cannot shut his eyes to the fact that the old Marxian *Internationale* is a thing of the past, and that mankind has fallen into new groups, according to the connexions between national States. Besides that, all Presidents are apt to be Conservative, even Social Democrat ones!"

The beginnings of agitation.

The Opposition proceeded in the early months of the war by meetings in different places. Its activities began to be felt in Berlin, Gotha, Bremen, Leipzig, and Hamburg. When the ten members whom Social Democracy sent to the Prussian Landtag met to decide the policy of their Group, it was discovered that they were divided, five to five. Karl Liebknecht was one of the five on the side of the Opposition.

The world outside the ranks of Social Democracy knew little of the rift of the Party till November, when the Directorate of the Social Democrat Party in Würtemberg suddenly ejected the editorial body of the Würtemberg Party organ, the *Schwäbische Tagwacht*, which, like *Vorwärts*, had ranged itself with the Opposition. Stuttgart, the capital of the kingdom of Würtemberg, was one of the first centres of agitation against the official policy of the Party. As early as August 21, 1914, at a private gathering of certain local leaders, violent speeches were made against the Group in the Reichstag. Those who voted credits for the war were denounced as rogues and humbugs.

Agitation in Würtemberg.

In September Karl Liebknecht was in Stuttgart. Liebknecht's name is as well known outside Germany as that of any German Socialist. He owed, no doubt, originally a good part of his prominence to the fact that he was the son of Wilhelm Liebknecht. That he is a man of the calibre of his father it does not seem possible to maintain. But he has an energy which is in part extreme nervous excitability. Born in 1871, he is a lawyer by profession, and a speaker who does not qualify his words. He is, perhaps, less afraid than any German Social Democrat leader of standing alone. He sat in the Reichstag as member for Potsdam, and in the Prussian Landtag as member for a division of Berlin. Already before the war he belonged to the extreme section which repudiated on principle all concern for the national cause. He is, in fact, what we have since come to know as a Bolshevik.

Liebknecht now divulged to the comrades in Stuttgart what hardly any one in Germany as yet knew—that at the meeting of the Group on August 3 fourteen members had voted against voting the credits.

At a meeting on September 21 in Stuttgart, one of the local leaders, Westmeyer, declared that if the Party had done its duty war would have been prevented: "If only 500,000 workmen in Germany had started a general strike the Government would have thought twice about going to war." The Party, Westmeyer cried, had been sold and betrayed by its chiefs. On November 9 another Würtemberg Social Democrat, Crispien, spoke vehemently against the Party leaders. "It is terrible to think of the day of reckoning. Think of the day when the women come, whose husbands have fallen, when the cripples come marching up and say to us, 'German Social Democracy left us in the lurch at the moment of our greatest need: now we are going to settle accounts with you!' That is what they are afraid of, and that is why they want to get all the local branches and all the local organs into their hands." In the *Schwäbische Tagwacht* Crispien and others carried on a campaign of denunciation, and this brought about the violent action on the part of the local Party Directorate.[1]

There has been a tendency in certain quarters to represent the Opposition as coinciding with the sections of the Party described at the outset as "Left Centre" and "Extremist." This, however, is only very roughly true. It is true, no doubt, in the case of a good many, that they were now in opposition because by their principles and their habitual instincts it was almost impossible for them to be anything but against the Government. On the other hand, there were many hitherto belonging to the Left extremity of the Party who, believing either that Germany had been wantonly attacked or that, at any rate, the interests of the German working-class would suffer by a

[1] Berger, pp. 79, 80; Haenisch, p. 42.

German defeat, now threw themselves into the national quarrel. And there were many who had belonged to the Right of the Party and had, on principle, no objection to parliamentary compromise with other Parties, but who now came to the conclusion that Germany's case in this particular war was a bad one, and ranged themselves therefore with the Opposition. Most notable among the latter was Eduard Bernstein.

Eduard Bernstein, Eisner, Erdmann, and Hilferding join the Opposition.

Bernstein, as we saw, had stood with the Majority at the outbreak of war. He continued for a time to frequent the meetings which the supporters of the "policy of the Fourth of August" held at a certain coffee-house in Berlin. But before two months were gone he had come to take a different view. Two lines of consideration, he tells us, powerfully affected him. One was the further light on the diplomatic history of the days immediately preceding the war which gradually penetrated to Germany, and which made the view of the facts, upon which the action of the Group on August 4 had been based, the view put forward by the German Government, now seem false. The other consideration was his observation of the subtle change taking place in the inner attitude of the Social Democrat Majority. At the outset they had definitely disclaimed any approval of the Government's foreign policy, and had only voted the war-credits under the overwhelming Russian peril; but the new association in work between Social Democrats and Government was obliterating all distinction in outlook between the Government and themselves, was bringing them all together on to a non-Socialist platform. They had been, he felt, corrupted by the applause of the world.

In the autumn, therefore, of 1914 Bernstein approached Haase. "I am afraid," he said, "you were right: our Party is indeed in the thick of a crisis, compared with which all previous crises were child's play. For myself, I cannot go any farther along this road." He wrote in a similar sense to Kautsky and Mehring, from whom he had hitherto been divided by wide differences.

Another man who had belonged to the Right before the war, and now joined the Opposition, was Kurt Eisner. He had been specially singled out for attack in the old days by Kautsky and Mehring, as one who had apostatized from the pure Marxian doctrine towards an ethical, æsthetic view of the world. To the same category belongs August Erdmann. Rudolf Hilferding, another of those who joined the Opposition, was, if not really a Revisionist, suspected of having tendencies that way.[1]

Heinrich Cunow.

On the other hand, some belonging to the Left passed after the outbreak of the war into the Nationalist camp. Prominent amongst these was Heinrich Cunow, a man who had won a great position in the Party as a distinguished *savant*, an authority on economics and anthropology. He had been closely associated in his literary and scientific work with Karl Kautsky. The war was destined to divide them. Cunow has given us his account of his motives in the first two

[1] See the article by Cunow entitled "Parteipsychologisches" in *Die Neue Zeit* for December 28, 1917. Where Cunow maintains that the Comrades who joined the Opposition did so on no ground of principle but simply in consequence of their personal temperament, he leaves out of account (as it was convenient to him to do) the whole question of the facts bearing on the outbreak of the war, which was for some, at any rate, of the Opposition the determining consideration.

months of the war, which may be taken with some allowance for the fact that people's accounts of their own inner experiences at a former time often owe something to the transfiguring work of memory and to subsequent impressions.

> It was just as little true in the case of the Opposition—then a little handful—that their attitude was determined by revolutionary or Marxian principles. I can speak on the point from personal experience, for I belonged myself to the Opposition during the first two months of the war, till the political situation became gradually clearer to me and I realized what great interests of the working-class were at stake. The attitude of the group in question was determined, first, by their attachment to old Party traditions, especially traditions of a pacifist tendency, and secondly by the expectation that the *Internationale* would soon enforce a peace, and that then German Social Democracy, if it had supported the Government, would lose its high standing within the *Internationale,* but above all by a strong feeling of antagonism to the State, which had hitherto oppressed Social Democracy, had for years applied the anti-Socialist laws with extreme harshness, bitterly persecuted and imprisoned many individuals, and on the very eve of war had been preparing to restrict the right of coalition. Besides all this, they were influenced by the belief that the whole political and economic system of the world, if the war went on for any length of time, would infallibly come down with a crash, and that then it would be all the easier for Social Democracy to arise out of the chaos as a revolutionary force the less they had compromised themselves with the old system and had "sanctioned" the war by voting war-credits.[1]

As is indicated in this passage, Cunow in the third month of the war broke with the Opposition. Another conspicuous transition was that of Paul Lensch, a vigorous writer, of a good Berlin family, then just over forty, who before the

Paul Lensch.

[1] *Die Neue Zeit* for December 28, 1917, p. 292.

war had belonged to the extreme Liebknecht wing, and had been editor of the uncompromising *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. At the fateful meeting of August 3, which he had attended as a Member of the Reichstag, he had not only been against voting the war-credits, but had urged, with Liebknecht, that the Party should actually vote against them. After the Group had voted the credits, Lensch spoke bitterly of their action. In a phrase which was much repeated, he said that the Group had "put the guts of the *Internationale* on the operating table." Yet a few months after the outbreak of war he passed to the opposite extreme of Jingoism and Anglophobia.

V

THE MINORITY GROWS

(DECEMBER 1914 TO MAY 1915)

In December 1914 the German Government asked for a new credit of 5,000,000,000 marks. Once more the Social Democrat Group met together to consider what it would do. It was plain that many reasons might have determined Social Democrats to vote money for the war under the terror of Russia in August, which no longer existed in December. Yet the Majority were again for voting the credits. Some members of the Majority wished the vote to be given in the House without any such explanatory declaration as had accompanied the vote of August 4, but this proposal was defeated after a hot debate. When the question of voting the credits was put, it was discovered that the Minority against it had grown from fourteen—the "baker's dozen," as they were contemptuously named by the Majority—to seventeen. Haase, as President, would have, as before, to read out the declaration. The Minority obtained with difficulty permission for Haase to insert in the declaration a cautiously guarded sentence about Belgium and Luxemburg. It stated that the Social Democrats "did not depart from the standpoint which the Chancellor had taken on August 4 with regard to Belgium and Luxemburg." This was

The vote of December 2, 1914: Liebknecht votes alone.

intended to imply that the Social Democrats regarded the violation of Belgium as a "wrong," in agreement with the admission made by Bethmann Hollweg in his speech of that day, and held that Belgium must be not only restored, but "indemnified."[1] Perhaps the casual hearer or reader might have been pardoned, had they failed to discern that there was all this in the apparently dutiful phrase.

The declaration, as drawn up, began:—

> The Social Democrat Group still holds the same ground as in its declaration of August 4. We opposed, up to the last moment, the war which has been brought about by a clash of economic interests. The frontiers of our country are still menaced by hostile forces. For this reason, the German people is still to-day bound to put forth its whole strength for the defence of the country. Therefore, Social Democracy grants the credits asked for. . . .

The declaration next acknowledged the people's debt of gratitude to the fighters in the field, and re-affirmed the right of every nation to integrity and independence. It continued:—

> We stand fast by what we said on August 4; we demand that so soon as ever the aim of the war, security, has been attained and our opponents are disposed for peace, the war shall be concluded by a peace which makes friendship with neighbouring nations possible.

The declaration then condemned the artificial working up of hatred against other nations, touched upon the obligations created by the social need consequent on the war at home, called on the Government to

[1] So Haase explained the sentence in his speech at the *Reichskonferens*. He pointed out that when Dr. David gave the resolution of December 2, 1914, in his book in defence of German Social Democracy, he significantly left out the sentence about Belgium.

trust the people, and protested against the censorship, especially the censorship of the Press.

One member of the Minority, Karl Liebknecht, asked the sanction of the Group for his giving an independent vote against the war-credits; to vote the credits was, he urged, forbidden by the resolutions of the Party in general assembly before the war. This request the Group refused. The Minority, as a whole, resolved, as before, to subordinate their personal convictions to the will of the Majority.

Once more, therefore, on December 2, 1914, the world saw the Social Democrat Reichstag Group vote as a solid body for war-credits. There was, however, now one conspicuous dissentient. In spite of the previous party decision, Karl Liebknecht did vote against the credits. He voted alone. At the same time he sent in to the President of the Reichstag in writing a memorandum explaining his action: the war was an Imperialist war of conquest.[1] This memorandum the President of the Reichstag, Herr Kaempf, refused to allow to be entered upon the records of the House, but it was disseminated widely as a pamphlet by Liebknecht's friends in the country.

The Group censures Liebknecht.

Liebknecht's action on December 2 was an obvious defiance of Party discipline. Even the rest of the Minority, who had waived their scruples in the interests of the solid Party front, could not approve of it. A resolution was passed almost unanimously by the Group, Ma-

[1] It is important to note that Liebknecht did not apparently mean that the war was an Imperialist war of conquest on the German side only. His position has always been that Imperialist and capitalist ambitions on *both* sides have brought on the war—that it is six of one and half a dozen of the other. His position would thus correspond with the extreme Socialist pacifists in Great Britain.

jority and Minority alike, censuring Liebknecht. The bulk of the Social Democrat Press regarded him as guilty of a gross breach of Party discipline.

On February 2, 1915, Frohme proposed in a private meeting of the Group that Liebknecht should be deprived of his privileges as a member of the Group. The Group, however, passed, by 82 votes to 7, a resolution to the effect that it was not competent to proceed against a member beyond expressing its disapproval of his action. The question of exclusion must be reserved for a *Parteitag*. The Trade Unionist leader, Legien, threatened on this occasion that, if Liebknecht were not expelled from the Group, he and others, for whom he spoke, might consider whether they could continue to belong to it, but he was prevailed upon to withdraw his motion.[1] On the same day, it was re-affirmed by 93 votes to 4 that the Group must in all circumstances vote solid in plenary sessions of the Reichstag; whatever individual differences there might be behind closed doors, Party unity must be preserved in the eyes of the world.[2]

Opposition has a majority in the Socialist Group in the Prussian House of Representatives.

Notwithstanding this, in February 1915 the division of opinion between the Social Democrat Majority and Minority became apparent in the Prussian House of Representatives. In this case the Majority, i.e. those who stood for the same policy as the majority of the Reichstag Group, were now actually in the minority, Paul Hirsch having changed sides since the previous autumn; in other words, the opposition to "the policy of the Fourth of August," which commanded (and that still secretly) a minority only of the 110 Social Democrat members in

[1] These details are given in Haase's second speech at the *Reichskonferenz*.

[2] *Vorwärts*, December 22, 1915.

the *Imperial* Reichstag, commanded a majority of the Social Democrat members (six to four) in the *Prussian* Lower House. The six consisted of Karl Liebknecht, Ströbel (one of the editors of *Vorwärts*), Paul Hirsch, Adolf Hoffmann (an elderly, solid workingman), Paul Hoffmann, and Hofer; the four of Conrad Haenisch, Otto Braun, Hué, and Leinert. This fact enabled the views of the opposition to be put forward in the declaration read out on February 9, 1915, by Paul Hirsch in the name of the Group as a whole. Karl Liebknecht, in his speech on March 2, proclaimed the views of the extreme section of the opposition with characteristic *abandon*. On the other hand, Conrad Haenisch, belonging to the Four, felt at liberty in his speech of March 3 to give emphatic expression to the "policy of the Fourth of August," so that the disagreement between the two sections of the Group was manifested with sufficient publicity.

The vote of March 20, 1915: Rühle votes with Liebknecht.

In March 1915 the Imperial Government asked the Reichstag to vote war-credits for the third time, and this time not 5,000, but 10,000 millions of marks were asked for. The problem before the Social Democrats was complicated by a new factor. The two former votes of credit had been moved, not as part of the ordinary Imperial Budget, but as extraordinary credits voted for the specific purpose of national defence in the war. The 10,000 million vote of credit on this occasion was incorporated in the Imperial Budget (*Reichsetat*). Now, it had been the standing practice of German Social Democrats that, whilst they voted the Budgets of the several Federal States, which were not for military purposes, it was just the Imperial Budget which they had always refused to vote. The demand of the Govern-

ment for money in March 1915 brought them up against a new and painful breach with their past. At the private meeting of the Group some one moved that, instead of the 10,000 millions asked for, only 5,000 should be voted, as on former occasions; but this apparently pointless compromise was negatived by 64 votes to 34. On the main question of voting the Imperial Budget, the Minority against was 30. The Majority was left with 69 votes.

On March 20 the Imperial Budget was moved in the Reichstag. The Minority of 30 no longer conformed their public action to that of the Majority. Georg Ledebour, one of the Minority members, an elderly, clean-shaven man, Hanoverian by birth and upbringing, with something of the appearance of an American actor, cast away reticence and thrust before the House the divergent views of the Minority. The Majority, through the mouth of Philipp Scheidemann, thought it necessary to let the House know that they repudiated Ledebour's utterances. This conflict of speeches manifested the division of the Party in the Reichstag on March 20, just as it had been manifested in the Prussian House of Representatives in the first days of the month.

Scheidemann will play a prominent rôle in our story. He was born at Cassel in 1863, and is a printer by trade. Before the outbreak of the war he had come to be one of the principal figures in the Social Democrat Group in the Reichstag, where he sat for Solingen. In February 1913 he had been chosen to be Vice-President of the House. The gifts which had enabled him to rise were less any great eminence of mind or character than a considerable diplomatic address. He is what would be called in England "a good Parliamentary hand," and can

manage difficult situations with dexterity. An effective and ready speaker, he is very conscious of his audience, and undoubtedly is glad that attention should be directed upon his person. Like many vain people, he is also somewhat easily swayed by the currents of opinion which he meets and led by those whom he aspires to lead.

The Group censures Liebknecht and Rühle.

When the moment for voting came, Liebknecht, as on the last occasion, gave his vote against the credits. And he was now no longer solitary; one other member, Otto Rühle, voted with him. The thirty who had opposed the voting of the Budget at the private meeting of the Group also now separated themselves publicly from the Majority. They did not, indeed, vote against the Budget, but they ostentatiously left the Chamber in a body before the voting took place. A vote of censure was duly passed by the Group upon Liebknecht and Rühle, as it had been passed upon Liebknecht in December. Then, however, the censure had been almost unanimous; now seventeen votes were found to acquit the two insubordinate members of blame against the sixty-seven which condemned. Liebknecht was disavowed on April 18 by a resolution of the Committee of the Union of Social Democrat *Wahlvereine* in his own province of Brandenburg.

Military proceedings against Liebknecht.

An attempt of the military authorities to put Liebknecht under constraint about this time miscarried. He had been enrolled as an *Armierungssoldat*—i.e. a soldier in the noncombatant equipment service—and the military authorities contended that this gave them jurisdiction over him. On the other hand, the Deputy of the Imperial Chancellor in the

Reichstag gave it as his opinion that Liebknecht was immune from military arrest, in virtue of his seat in the Reichstag (Article 31 of the Constitution). This view was accepted by the Government, and the proceedings against him had been stopped before the matter came up in the Reichstag on May 14.

Controversy in the Party: "Majority or Minority?"

The division of the Party began to be reflected in the Party Press, in polemics between *Vorwärts* and other papers in sympathy with the Minority on the one hand and the Majority papers on the other.[1] The question "Majority or Minority?" became the one mainly agitated in the local Social Democrat organizations all over Germany. Some localities ranged themselves predominantly with one side, other localities with the other side. It was recognized by both sides that the controversy could not be finally settled till a General Assembly of the whole Party (a *Parteitag*) could be held, and this could not be till the great numbers of Comrades on active service came home.[2] We find in this connexion that appeals are made by all parties in Germany to the sentiment of men at the front. When the armies come home, each party affirms, they will make short work of its opponents. Letters were printed in May 1915 in the German Press from workingmen at the front, members of the Builders' Trade Union, condemning the Minority with great bitterness, and saying that the action of Liebknecht and Ledebour had caused wide-spread resentment among the Comrades in field-grey.[3]

[1] "The attack on *Vorwärts* goes merrily forward, hardly in the interests of Party solidarity!" (*Vorwärts*, May 2, 1915.)

[2] See the account of the meeting at Frankfurt addressed by Haase (*Vorwärts*, May 19, 1915).

[3] *Münchner Neueste Nachrichten*, May 9, 1915.

When the Reichstag met in May 1915 the entrance of Italy into the war had acted momentarily as a check to the propaganda of the Minority by magnifying the national danger. On May 28 the spokesman of the Social Democrat Group in the Reichstag was no longer Hugo Haase, but Ebert. Haase was still officially President, but his identifying himself with the Minority caused his functions to be exercised to some extent by members of the Majority. Ebert repeated the assurances given on August 4, 1914, that the Social Democrats would stand fast by the country. But he added that they desired a peace not embittered by any fresh annexations.

The debate of May 28, 1915: the question of annexations.

The burning question of "Annexations" first came up prominently before the German people in this debate of May 28, 1915. Pan-German circles had started agitating for vast new territorial acquisitions as a war-aim. The notorious memorandum of the Six Associations to the Chancellor had been presented (secretly) a few days before. In the speech which the Chancellor made at this meeting of the Reichstag, he had spoken ambiguously of the "guarantees" required, leaving it open to annexationists and anti-annexationists to dispute whether "guarantees" meant annexations or not. The utterance of Ebert in his speech awakened the controversy on this subject into life in the Reichstag. The other speaker for the Social Democrats, Scheidemann, took a similar line to Ebert. The speakers for the Conservatives and National-Liberals contended for annexations. Liebknecht at one point raised a storm by ejaculating "Capitalist interests!"

One may notice how the emergence of this question of annexations affected the position of the Majority.

The bulk of the Majority, not all of them, were opposed to annexations. The standing reproach directed against the Majority by the Minority was that by their support of the Government they had obliterated all distinction between themselves and the *bourgeois* parties; the old attitude of protest and revolt, on which Social Democracy had prided itself, had been abandoned. But now the question of annexations furnished an issue on which men like Scheidemann could once more take up an attitude of protest against Imperialism. It was no longer an antagonism to the Government—Scheidemann maintained that Bethmann Hollweg agreed with him; but it was an antagonism to Pan-Germans and Imperialist National-Liberals, to all who desiderated any territorial conquests as a result of the war. The cry of "No annexations!" enabled members of the Social Democrat Majority still to represent themselves as fighters for anti-Imperialist principles.

VI

MINORITY MANIFESTOS

(JUNE TO AUGUST, 1915)

SIGNS began to multiply in the spring of 1915 that the old antagonism of the Government to Social Democracy, which had seemingly disappeared in August 1914, had revived in reference to that part of Social Democracy which went with the Minority. Various meetings were forbidden by the authorities on May Day. On May 15 thirty meetings were prohibited in the country round Dresden. On June 9 a lecture which Haase had arranged to give at Düsseldorf on "The Past and Future of Social Democracy" was forbidden. At Bremen a meeting had been arranged for June 14, at which Haase was to speak; the General in Command at Altona refused to give the necessary permission. On June 12 the police raided the printing office of the Social Democrat Party at Düsseldorf; a member of the Party had his house searched and was put under arrest.

The Government's heavy hand on the Minority.

Some of the more extreme wing of German Social Democracy, restless to attack the Majority, but finding themselves muzzled in Germany by the censorship, adopted the device of communicating articles to the Swiss Socialist paper, the *Berner Tagwacht*. In the course of these articles they published certain details as to a secret debate in the Reichstag early in June on

The disclosures of the *Berner Tagwacht*.

cruelty in the German army. This was considered an outrageous violation of confidence, and the Directorate of the Party made haste to condemn the action of the members in question.

The "Open Letter" of June 1915.

Two documents circulated in June 1915 caused wide commotion. One was an "Open Letter to the Chiefs of the Party and the Reichstag Group." It was dated June 9, and was originally signed by eleven members of the Minority in the Reichstag Group—Albrecht, Henke, Herzfeld, Kunert, Ledebour, Liebknecht, Rühle, Schwartz, Stadthagen, Stolle, and Vogtherr—and some 100 other prominent members of the Party. About 1,400 other names of lesser known Comrades were appended. The Letter denounced "the policy of the Fourth of August"; accused the Party of pursuing a "back-stairs" policy—i.e. a policy of secret understanding with the Government; and called for the throwing over of the Civil Peace and the resumption of class-war. The Reichstag Group, it said, had abandoned all resistance to the Imperialist policy of conquest. It claimed to express the feelings of a large section of the people when it called upon the Party authorities to act in the sense indicated. Otherwise the responsibility for all that might follow would rest upon those who had driven the Party on to the down-grade. This Letter was circulated in hundreds of copies among the rank and file of the Party, and further signatures were invited.

"Das Gebot der Stunde."

The other document was a Manifesto signed by Haase, Bernstein, and Kautsky. It appeared in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* of June 19, and was headed "Das Gebot der Stunde" ("The Requirement of the Hour"). Its occasion was the memorandum of the Six Associations.

The three Social Democrat leaders contended that the war had ceased to be a war of defence, such as had been envisaged by the Reichstag Group on August 4, and became an Imperialist war of conquest, to which a Social Democracy, true to its essential principles, could not give any support. The original idea and first draft of this document were due to Bernstein.

These two documents at once became centres for the agitation in the Social Democrat Party, and even the non-Socialist Press was moved. The Government suspended the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* for a period, as a punishment for printing the Manifesto. On June 22 *Vorwärts* published a protest by ten members of the Party Directorate against the action of Haase, Bernstein, and Kautsky. The Social Democrat Press took sides. The agitation nevertheless made the Party Directorate feel it incumbent upon it to issue some Manifesto of its own, which, while adhering to "the policy of the Fourth of August," showed that the Majority had not abandoned their desire for peace or their anti-Imperialist principles. It was necessary for them to go as far as they could in the direction of Haase and his associates, in order to take the wind out of the sails of the Minority. They did this in a Manifesto published officially on the authority of the Directorate in the *Vorwärts* of June 26 under the heading "Social Democracy and Peace." They took occasion in it to protest against annexations. "The people want no annexations, the people want peace." For publishing this Manifesto *Vorwärts* was suspended by the Government for five days, on the ground that it contravened the prohibition to discuss war-aims, and other Social Democrat papers publishing the Manifesto were apparently likewise suspended.

"Social Democracy and Peace."

At the meetings of the Party Committee in Berlin on June 30 and July 1, at which forty-one Local Committees of the German Empire were represented, a vote of censure was passed by a large majority on the "underground work obviously directed from a central quarter" (a glance at Haase), with the ultimate object of splitting the Party. It was also declared that Haase's signature of Bernstein's manifesto had been an act incompatible with his obligations as President. Paul Lensch, who had now completed his transition from the extreme "Radical" to the Nationalist wing of the Party, in an article published in the *Schwäbische Tagwacht* (quoted in the *Vossische Zeitung*, June 28), called on Haase to resign his leadership. "The President of a Party," he said, "who is doing his best to thwart the policy of the Party as a whole is a monstrosity (*Unding*)."

The Party Committee speaks.

A controversy in *Vorwärts* between the Party Directorate and the Editorial Committee of the paper about this time throws some light on the charge of a "back-stairs policy." There had been nothing dishonourable, the Directorate contended, in what had been done. It had merely brought to the notice of the Government, as it was bound to do, things which were causing trouble to the Party—the suppression of newspapers, the arrest of Comrades, etc. The proceedings to which the phrase pointed, the editors reply, are very different from that. The day will come when it will be possible to speak out about them. The Directorate vehemently repudiates the insinuation that there had been any other dealings between itself and the Government, other than those it had specified. The editors answer that it is certainly not

Is the Majority in collusion with the Government?

true that all questions relating to the war had been dealt with in the light of publicity, as the Minority demand. At the same date we get an alarm in the non-Socialist Jingo Press that there is a secret understanding between the Government and the Social Democrat Majority with regard to the peace-feelers being put out in neutral countries. It is even suggested that the Directorate's Manifesto was really published in *Vorwärts* by the connivance of the Government, and that the suspension of the paper had been a blind. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of June 27 issues a declaration that the German Government has had nothing to do with international peace propaganda, and given no authorization in that direction either to Social Democrats or any other intermediaries.

Extremists and Imperialists desire a split.

Meantime, both the extreme Liebknecht wing of the Party and the extreme Imperialist wing, represented, for instance, by Kolb of Karlsruhe, are beginning to call for a disruption of the Party on the ground that that would be a lesser evil than continued co-operation with the opposite wing. The intermediate bulk of the Party, both Majority and Minority, are still trying to hold the Party together and pleading that a certain latitude should be conceded within the Party to variety of opinion.

Personal amenities.

The division of opinion in the Party was leading to bitter personal asperities. At a private meeting of the Social Democrat members of the Prussian House of Representatives, now reduced to nine, more than one of the four who agreed with the "policy of the Fourth of August" expressed themselves as favourable to the "economic annexation" of Belgium by force. Against

this Ströbel, one of the editors of *Vorwärts*, who belonged to the opposing five, protested. He declared himself against all annexationist projects, however veiled under economic forms. Some of this dispute within the Group got into the public Press, in connexion with an attack Lensch made upon Ströbel. "The hour of reckoning," Ströbel retorted in *Vorwärts* (July 18), "will strike. Till then Lensch and his like may exult in their rowdiness and their licence to make fools of themselves." About the same time a disclosure in the *Berner Tagwacht* shows that strong language was not used on one side only. In the lobbies of the Reichstag, said the correspondent of that paper, in the hearing of all the opponents of Socialism, the members of the Social Democrat Majority reviled Liebknecht as an "ambitious ass," a "buffoon," etc. In the private meetings of the Group, we are told, names which in English might be represented by "ragamuffin," "lout," "clown" were hurled at Liebknecht; Ledebour was described as a "political ape (*Fatzke*)"; Bernstein as "a political child, who cannot be taken seriously." The Comrade who writes to the *Berner Tagwacht* goes on to speak of the "abysses of moral unscrupulousness and abandonment" on the side of the Majority. "All the dirt which Government publications have flung at the Party for the last fifty years shrinks up to mere little heaps in comparison. Their insinuations, their slanders, their spitting, have been only too successfully copied!"

***Umlerner* and *Quertreiber*.**

We may notice that at this time a common nickname applied to the Majority was that of *Umlerner*. Some of the Majority themselves professed that their ideas had undergone correction through further experience, that there had been a reversal in their mental attitude

owning to fresh learning—a process summed up in the one German word *umlernen.* If these members of the Majority called themselves *Umlerner* in an honourable sense, their opponents habitually used the term of them with mordant irony. The name of reproach, on the other hand, fastened by the Majority upon the Minority was that of *Quertreiber,* "people driving across the course," or, in our English idiom, "people who queer the pitch" of Social Democracy.

VII

THE VOTE OF AUGUST 1915

The Reichstag Group and the Party Committee define their war-aims.

On August 20 the Government was again going to ask for war-credits. Six days before (August 14) the Reichstag Group of 110 members and the Party Committee (consisting, as we have seen, of representatives of the local organizations over the Empire) had a common meeting to discuss the critical question of war-aims. Dr. Eduard David presented a statement of the views of the Majority. David is one of the ablest men in the Party, and he might have seemed designated for the first place. Although he has been passed by Scheidemann, he is unquestionably the man of the more solid qualities. He is a Jew by race, and he entered political life from academic antecedents. His poor physique has no doubt handicapped him, but he is an excellent speaker, and has made his mark as a man of letters. Without going as far as the more extreme Imperialist Socialists, David during the war has stood more to the Right than Scheidemann, in the strongly Nationalist wing of the Party. Bernstein presented the statement for the Minority. The resolution, passed after a debate, naturally supported the Majority. These resolutions were published by *Vorwärts* on August 24, and are as follows:

1. No cession of German territory: this applies to the re-uniting of Alsace-Lorraine to France under any form whatsoever.

2. Security to be obtained for the commercial development of Germany by—
   (*a*) the Open Door in all colonial dependencies:
   (*b*) the inclusion of the most-favoured-nation clause in the treaty of peace concluded with all the belligerent Powers:
   (*c*) the abrogation, as far as possible, of tariffs:
   (*d*) the improvement of social-political institutions in the sense desired by the International Labour Movement:
   (*e*) freedom of the seas, viz. abolition of the right of capture at sea and the internationalization of all straits important to world-commerce.
3. No disruption of Austria-Hungary or Turkey.
4. No annexations of non-German territory by the German Empire.
5. A perpetual International Court of Arbitration.

According to a statement by Wolfgang Heine, the resolution declaring against the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France was passed by 81 to 14 votes of the Reichstag Group and 31 to 7 votes of the Party Committee.[1]

The Committee had to face the thorny question of Belgium. Dr. David proposed a resolution worded as follows:

From the point of view of German interests no less than from that of justice, we hold the restoration of Belgium to be imperative, but neither can Germany, in the interest of its own security and freedom of movement, permit Belgium to become a military advanced post and political instrument of England.

The qualification contained in the second half of the resolution provoked the opposition of the Minority members of the Group. They urged that it left

[1] *Berliner Tageblatt*, January 11, 1916, evening.

a pretext for limiting Belgium's future independence, which must be absolute. David therefore withdrew this part of the resolution before it was put to the vote. Liebknecht, however, wanted something more positive. He moved that after the words "restoration of Belgium" these further words should be added:—

in unlimited internal and external independence, every kind of compulsory political or economic attachment being excluded.

This amendment the Group threw out by 60 votes to 42, and the Party Committee by 30 votes to 10. It was plain that the German Social Democrat Majority, when it asked for the "restoration of Belgium," was far from meaning a genuine restoration of Belgium's independence.[1]

The question finally came up how the war-aims of the Party Committee could be communicated to the people. The Government prohibition of a public discussion of war-aims, then in force, made it impossible to publish them straight away in the Party Press. There was only one way in which the Government's prohibition could be evaded, and that was by their being read out as an official pronouncement of the Group in the Reichstag. The privileges of the House in that case would secure their being reported. So averse, however, were many of the Majority at that time from admitting the light of publicity upon their proceedings that the proposal to read out the war-aims resolution in the Reichstag was strongly opposed. It was eventually only carried by Dr. David's casting vote.[2]

[1] Kautsky, *Die Neue Zeit* for September 14, 1917, p. 557.
[2] Haase's second speech at the *Reichskonferenz*.

The Government was again on this occasion asking for 10,000 millions of marks. At the private meeting of the Group, at which the action of the Party was decided upon, the Minority against voting the credits had risen to 36—practically a third of the Group. Haase, the President, being still disqualified by his views from speaking for the Party in the Reichstag, the speaker chosen was Dr. David. His speech, of strong Nationalist complexion, gave pleasure to the non-Socialist parties. *Vorwärts,* on the other hand, as the *Frankfurter Zeitung* remarked (August 21), could not conceal its chagrin that David's utterances should have diverged at no point from those of the non-Socialist speakers.

The vote of August 20, 1915: Dr. David speaks for the Party.

At the Third Reading of the Bill, 32 (or, according to another account, 29) members of the Social Democrat Group left the Chamber before the voting. Three of the 36 who had voted at the Party meeting against voting the War Budget remained in the Chamber and voted with the Majority. Liebknecht alone voted against the Budget. Rühle, who had voted with Liebknecht on March 20, published a statement in the *Vorwärts* of August 26 that he had intended to do so also on this occasion, but the vote had been taken so suddenly, while he happened to be absent, that he was unable to reach the Chamber in time.

Why, if some thirty members were ready to leave the Chamber, were they not ready to vote outright against the credits, like Liebknecht? It was in obedience to an old rule of the Group, which aimed at preserving within the Chamber the appearance of a solid front. On February 2, 1915, the Group had decided by 93 votes to 4 that it must in all cir-

cumstances give a united vote.[1] But already in August 1915 Bernstein tells us,[2] the feeling came up amongst the thirty as they sat in a neighbouring room, whilst the voting was going on, that they were playing a sorry farce. Some members gave open expression to the feeling. When the Government next asked for credits, the feeling would have determined new action.

[1] *Vorwärts*, December 22, 1915.
[2] *Die Zukunft* for April 21, 1917, p. 72.

VIII

MINORITY PROPAGANDA AT THE END OF 1915

(AUGUST TO DECEMBER 1915)

The Government's hand still heavy on the Minority.

BETWEEN August and December 1915 there was no conspicuous new development in German Social Democracy. The more or less subterranean work of the Minority, by living speech and pamphlet, went forward. At the beginning of September we find two prominent members of the Party at Düsseldorf, the Branch Secretary and another man, cited before the local Tribunal on the charge of exciting class-hatred through the distribution of a pamphlet, "The Chief Enemy the Enemy at Home." Haase himself conducted the defence, but the accused were condemned to three months' imprisonment.

On October 3 *Vorwärts* announces:—

Special measures have been taken by the Government against the more pacifist wing of the Party—i.e. the Liebknecht group. A large number of Comrades (both men and women) in Essen, Düsseldorf and other places within the district of the 7th Army Corps have been warned by the Police, upon instructions from the military General Command, that during the course of the war they are prohibited from *making any speeches* either in public or private meetings, and from *circulating any printed matter*. A contravention of this order will lead to arrest for the term of the war. These measures do not apply to the Social Democrat Party as a

whole, but only to the section represented by those who signed the Open Letter of June 9.

The Zimmerwald Conference.

In September an International Socialist Conference was held at Zimmerwald in Switzerland (September 5 to 8). The Socialist Parties of various neutral countries were officially represented there, but no official representatives came from the main Socialist organizations of any belligerent country, except Italy. Two eccentric pacifists found their way to Zimmerwald from France; from Germany there came ten members of the Minority. But these ten split at Zimmerwald into a more and a less extreme section. The less extreme section was represented by Ledebour and Adolf Hoffmann. They affixed their signatures to the Manifesto finally passed by the Conference, calling for an immediate resumption of the International class-war to end the war between nations. This Manifesto, after the return of the ten to Germany, was widely circulated among the people. The more extreme section of the Germans attached themselves to a group whose leader and prophet at Zimmerwald was a Pole, called Sobelsohn, but better known by his "party name" of Karl Radek. Under this name he was active as an agitator and writer. Two years later the world was to hear more of him as associated with Trotsky in Petrograd, after the Bolshevik Government had seized the direction of things in Russia. For this section even Ledebour and Hoffmann were lukewarm and the Zimmerwald Manifesto tame.[1] The

[1] The section in question has split away in Germany from the body of Social Democracy and constituted a separate organization of its own under the name of *Internationale Sozialisten Deutschlands.*

organ of the section in Germany was a paper called *Lichtstrahlen,* edited by Julian Borchardt, to which Radek was a frequent contributor.

The Trade Unions side with the Majority.

One feature of the situation which was coming into notice at this time was that the Trade Unions in Germany, under the influence of such leaders as Legien, President of the General Committee of Trade Unions, a man with whom appreciation of the lower material goods would seem to determine policy rather than any striving after ideal values, and Winnig, second President of the German Builders' Union, had gone strongly on the side of the Social Democrat Majority against the Minority. They stood for materialist *Realpolitik,* not Socialist theories.

The official organ of German Trade Unionism (*Korrespondenzblatt der Generalkommission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands*) wrote on January 15, 1916:—

> The policy of the Fourth of August, 1914, corresponds with the most vital interests of the Trade Unions; it removes all peril of hostile invasion; it gives protection against the disintegration of German territory and the destruction of flourishing branches of German industry; it gives protection against the doom involved in an unhappy end to the war, which would burden us for decades to come with war-indemnities. This policy further secures to us not only our fields for industry and for the production of raw materials at home, but also the importation from abroad of the raw materials required for our manufactures and markets in other countries for the disposal of our products. It frustrates the desires of our enemies for our strategic and economic overthrow, and guarantees to German labour free development and a free world-market. . . . The Trade Unions must in all circumstances hold fast to their policy of the Fourth of August, and cannot warn urgently enough against the efforts being made to thwart this policy, which is the policy of the Group to-day.

According to the older theory of the Social Democrats, as expounded by Kautsky, the Trade Unions, as such, ought to keep clear of politics. It is not necessary that a member of a Trade Union should be a Social Democrat. The Trade Unions might indeed serve as a recruiting-ground for the Social Democrat Party, but it is the Party, and not the Trade Unions, to which action in the political sphere belongs. When, therefore, the Trade Union officials began to take sides against the Minority, it became a subject of complaint in Minority circles that they were going beyond their sphere.

Campaign against high prices.

In spite of its division, the Social Democrat Party still, for some purposes during these autumn months, acted as a whole, in carrying on a campaign against the high prices of food, ascribed to profiteering, and against the Censorship. A protest inserted by *Vorwärts* (November 6), signed by the Directorate and Committee of the Social Democrat Party of Germany, "Against the High Prices" (*Gegen die Teuerung*), caused the paper to be subjected to stricter Government control. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (November 13) published an answer to this appeal from the Imperial Chancellor. It assured the Social Democrats of the Chancellor's sympathy with the sufferings of the poor and of the Government's firm intention to put down profiteering.

Four Comrades visit Belgium, November 1915.

In November Scheidemann and three other Comrades of the Majority paid a visit to the front in Belgium, and were entertained by Headquarters. This brought upon them a storm of invective from the side of the Minority. On November 14 we find, for instance, the Social Democrats of the Weimar

electoral district passing a resolution approving of the Zimmerwald Conference and censuring the four Comrades who had gone to Belgium.[1] We gather that Scheidemann was commonly referred to in certain circles by such names as "the Tourist in Belgium," "the Visitor to the Front," "the Cinema Hero." The language of some of the secretly distributed pamphlets was still more vigorous:—

> Whilst the Belgian proletariat, deprived of its rights, groans under a shameful dictatorship, official representatives of Social Democracy arrange to go on a pleasure tour arm in arm with the oppressors and tormentors through the midst of that unhappy country. Whilst their own comrades at home, because they will not deny and betray Socialism as *they* have done, are persecuted and harassed, thrown into prison and haled before the courts, *they* consent to receive invitations from the persecutors and enemies of Labour, and to be treated with wines and dainties. Is there, then, no workingman in all Germany who will spit in the faces of these rogues? Has nobody a dog-whip to drive these traitors to all the devils? Are the proletarians so destitute of self-respect that they can put up with such Judas action on the part of their leaders?

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[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* November 30.

IX

THE REICHSTAG SESSION OF DECEMBER 1915

THE December session of the Reichstag exercised Social Democrat circles long beforehand. There were many in the Minority who hoped that the occasion would be taken for a clearer public declaration of the war-aims for which they stood. Kautsky wrote to complain that in the official declaration of the war-aims of the Party, issued in August, nothing had been said about disarmament. Kolb, representing the Nationalist extremity of the Majority, answered in his Baden paper, the *Volksfreund,* that only a doctrinaire, shut up in theories from all knowledge of the world, could now renew the old demand of the *Internationale* for disarmament after the war.[1]

Demands of the Minority.

Both the extremes continued to press for a frank schism of the Party as the only way in which the issues could be cleared. Kautsky and the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* kept on asserting that the Minority must at last speak out in the Reichstag. It was even doubtful, they maintained, whether the Minority had not actually become the majority. It was certainly, they said, doubtful whether this was not

[1] *Kölnische Zeitung,* November 16, 1915.

the case in the country as a whole, and to some extent doubtful whether it was not the case in the Reichstag Group.

Socialists to address interpellation on peace: Group meeting of November 30.

Ten days before the meeting of the Reichstag (i.e. on November 30) a proposal was moved in the Group from the side of the Minority that an interpellation be addressed to the Chancellor, asking whether he was ready to enter upon negotiations for peace immediately on the basis of "no annexations." This proposal was defeated by 58 votes to 43.[1] An amendment was passed by 93 votes to 5,[2] that the Chancellor be asked on what conditions he was prepared to enter upon peace negotiations.

It now became a question of choosing the two Members to speak on the interpellation in the House. Scheidemann was proposed to speak first. According to precedent, when two Members spoke in the House for the Party upon one question, one belonged to the Right and one to the Left wing of the Party. It was therefore proposed by the Minority that, in this case too, a member of the Minority should be chosen to speak after Scheidemann. This was opposed by the Majority, and in the voting which followed, the speaker proposed by the Minority got only 47 votes as against the 75 and the 62 votes got respectively by the two speakers proposed by the Majority, Scheidemann and Landsberg. The Minority now asked that they might be given freedom of action, to express their views in the House independently of the Group. This proposal was defeated by 68 votes to 29. A member of the Majority then proposed that it should be made compulsory for every individual member of the Party Group to support in

[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* December 2. [2] Berger, p. 8.

the Reichstag the policy resolved on by the majority of the Group. The proposal was carried by 70 votes to 27.[1]

Haase at this point gave the Group to understand that he intended definitely to join the Minority, and therefore proposed to resign his position as President of the Group.[2]

The public announcement that an interpellation was going to be brought forward by the Social Democrat Group caused some excitement both within and without Social Democrat circles in the days preceding the meeting of the Reichstag. The Nationalist Press, of course, condemned it on the ground that it would give abroad the impression that Germany was weakening. Social Democrat Majority circles were pleasurably expectant; *Vorwärts* was pessimistic: "What do all interpellations help if the Imperial Chancellor answers only with evasions? . . ." Free utterance was the one thing needful.

The debate of December 9, 1915: Scheidemann and Landsberg speak against annexations.

The debate on peace-terms came on in the Reichstag on December 9. The Chancellor used more vague phrases; he talked about Germany's holding territories as "gages" (*Faustpfände*), about the necessity that Belgium should no longer furnish England with a "gate of invasion" (*Einfallsthor*) or "field of approach" (*Aufmarschgebiet*). The speakers for the various parties emphasised their view for or against annexations, as the case might be. Scheidemann and Landsberg, speaking for the Social Democrat Group, of course laid stress on the Party's desire for peace and opposition to annexations. They claimed that the terms used by the Chancellor

[1] *Vorwärts*, December 5. [2] Berger, p. 12.

implied agreement with their view. The expressions, indeed, of the Chancellor were interpreted by every Party in a sense favourable to itself. Landsberg argued that "gages" were things *given back.* Haase took occasion of a debate raised on a point of order to "disassociate himself with the utmost emphasis" from the views expressed by Scheidemann. The expressions used by the Chancellor, he said, had been "indefinite, general, and capable of many meanings." It was well that the German people and the world should learn that there were some, at any rate, in the Reichstag who did not accept his explanations. "Do you really desire," he cried, "that the result of all this carnage should be a Europe which is nothing better than a field of ruins?"

The Minority dissatisfied.

The line taken by the two Majority speakers gave great satisfaction to the Minority. They were convinced that the Chancellor's expressions did not really bear such a sense as Social Democracy could approve, and the attempt of the two speakers to accommodate them smoothly seemed to prevent any forcible expression of the principles of Social Democracy in international policy. Some even of the Majority were painfully impressed.[1] On the morning after the Peace debate more than thirty members of the Group signed a declaration of agreement with Haase. The Social Democrat "General Assembly" (*Generalversammlung*) of Scheidemann's own constituency of Solingen passed a resolution expressing dissatisfaction with his speech of December 9, and calling for a "more definite attitude." When, however, the Minority moved in a meeting of the Group that the Group should repudiate the utterances of the two speakers, the

[1] *Wenig erbaut,* Bernstein, p. 73.

Majority was strong enough to secure the rejection of the proposal.

The question of the new credits: debates in the Party, December, 1915.

On December 21 the Government was going again to ask for credits. On December 13 the Social Democrat Group met to consider its action on this new occasion. It was decided by 60 votes to 31 to offer no opposition to the *first* reading of the Supplementary Estimates, but it was left to the meeting of the following day to determine the attitude of the Group towards the Estimates on the decisive second reading.

On December 14 the question was brought to the vote. Fifty-eight Members were for voting the Budget, 38 were against. Ten Members, who were absent, sent in their suffrages in writing. The final result was that the Minority counted 44 members of the Group against 66, a proportion of exactly two to three.

On December 20, the day before the Estimates came on in the Reichstag, the Group had another meeting, and previous decisions, ruling out separate action on the part of the Minority, were confirmed. Haase now intimated his definite resignation of his position as President of the Reichstag Group. This left his position as President of the *Party* as a whole unchanged. Some members of the Majority published in the Press an appeal, described (though it was not really official) as coming "from the Bureau of the Party Directorate" (*"Aus dem Bureau des Parteivorstandes schreibt man uns"*) to Comrades all over the Empire to restrain their representatives in the Reichstag from separate action. There were, however, twenty members of the Minority—Bernstein, Bock, Büchner, Oskar Cohn, Dittmann, Geyer,

Haase, Herzfeld, Horn, Henke, Kunert, Ledebour, Liebknecht, Rühle, Stadthagen, Stolle, Schwartz, Vogtherr, Wurm, Zubeil[1]—who had resolved that they must give public expression to their convictions, even at the cost of a breach in the Party. They had determined to vote against the Budget, and had drawn up a declaration, giving the ground of their action, to be read out by Fritz Geyer.

The vote of December 21, 1915: the Twenty act independently.

December 21 came, and the split in the Social Democrat Group was exhibited to the world. Ebert, as the official spokesman of the Group, read a declaration to the effect that the necessities of self-defence made it incumbent upon the whole German people to support the Government in carrying on the war. Geyer read out the declaration of the Twenty, in which the Chancellor was accused of indirectly encouraging the Annexationists and the resolve of the Twenty to vote against the credits was justified. When the moment of voting came, the Social Democrat Group divided into three sections: the Twenty voted against the credits; twenty-two other members—Albrecht, Antrick, Baudert, Brandes, Emmel, Erdmann, Ewald, Edmund Fischer, Fuchs, Hoch, Hofrichter, Hüttmann, Hugel, Jäckel, Krätzig, Leutert, Peirotes, Reisshaus, Ryssel, Raute, Simon, Schmidt (of Meissen)—still acted as the Minority had done in March and August, viz., left the Chamber before voting took place; the remainder voted for the Estimates.

The action of the Twenty created an effervescence in the Press and in the country. Immediately after the sitting in the House the Party Group met and passed, by 63 votes to 15, a vote of censure on the

[1] Berger, pp. 11, 12.

Twenty, as guilty of a grave breach of discipline, which destroyed the unity of Party at a critical hour. A resolution was proposed by Legien, the Trade Unionist leader, and David, to exclude the Twenty from the Party; this, however, found only 18 votes to support it, and was consequently thrown out. A resolution proposed by Ebert and others to deprive them of the privileges attached to membership of the Group was likewise rejected. It was held sufficient for the time being that the Twenty should be severely censured.

Controversy throughout the Empire as to the Twenty.

The local Social Democrat organizations throughout the Empire passed resolutions during the next few weeks, condemning or approving the Twenty, according to the prevalent feeling in each centre. The *Vorwärts* of January 1, 1916, pointed out that the number of Social Democrat electors represented by the forty-four members of the Minority (1,380,590) was actually greater than the number of Social Democrat electors represented by the sixty-six members of the Majority (1,372,058). It did not, of course, follow, as *Vorwärts* admitted, that all the electors whom a deputy represented would necessarily endorse his action. Berlin itself was one of the places where the Minority was strongest. The Central Directorate of the Social Democrat Organizations for Greater Berlin passed, by 41 votes to 17, a resolution approving of the action of the Minority. How Berlin was regarded by the Majority may be seen from the following words of Kolb of Karlsruhe:—

The conditions of Berlin Social Democracy are depressing. But what can one expect when demagogism holds such sway as it does there? When every one who opens his mouth

wide enough gets a confidential post without any trouble, political life cannot but end in a swamp. And now that this Berlin Party swamp has been allowed to spread so far, it will not be an easy matter to get clear again.[1]

Dr. Berger writes (pp. 72, 73):—

The Berlin Social Democrat is a peculiar type. The strenuousness in work, the sense of duty, which we meet with in the [Social Democrat] organizations of the Rhenish-Westphalian industrial district, the Saar district, and Upper Silesia, where great bodies of power confront each other on the side of employers and workmen respectively—the Berlin Comrade has never been imbued with these things like the deep Westphalian, the self-reliant men of the Saar, and the good-tempered Silesians. The industry of Berlin is of another kind. It has not the gigantic dimensions of the Western districts. The Brandenburg environment and the Berlin atmosphere means a loss of colour. The immigration of foreign workmen in huge masses year by year gives emphasis to the fundamental note of all human effort—the desire to assert one's value as much as possible in one's own line. A comparison naturally suggests itself between the labouring masses of Berlin and the Roman *plebs* in the days of the Republic. One might find an interesting parallel in the political sensationalism and the tendency to go to extremes. The Roman populace at all events was ruder and more natural, if also perhaps more unstable. The modern city of intelligence and science, which has offered veritable hecatombs to the culture craze, whilst too much neglecting the education of the will, without which organizations cannot be held together, makes a less favourable total impression, and to-day is producing its evil fruits, although the Berlin Social Democrats have more opportunity for cultivating a political judgment than their Comrades in the industrial regions of the Rhine or Westphalia.

On the other hand, the Social Democrats of Hamburg (where hatred of England was especially bitter)

[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* November 25, 1915.

were strong for the Majority. The local Social Democrat paper, the *Hamburger Echo,* had, before the war, represented the Left Wing of the Party, but since the war had become Jingo and Anglophobe. At a meeting of the Party in Hamburg early in 1916, a speaker who spoke against the Majority was driven from the platform. A proposal brought forward in January to invite Haase to speak in Hamburg was vetoed by a large majority.[1]

[1] *Berliner Tageblatt,* January 27, 1916.

X

FROM JANUARY TO MARCH 1916

On January 7, 1916, the Committee of the Social Democrat Party came together. It passed the following series of resolutions by 28 votes to 11:—

The Party Committee condemns the Twenty.

The Party Committee, convoked according to the laws of the Party, to pass judgment on important questions concerning the Party as a whole, declares, in reference to the voting of the War Credits:—

The consent of the Group to the War Credits on December 21, 1915, was justified. It is the consistent following out of the policy initiated on August 4, 1914, the presuppositions of which still hold good to-day. Our enemies show no disposition to peace; on the contrary, they persist in their intention to ruin Germany and its Allies in an economic and military sense.

The thwarting of the policy of our Group by the procedure of the twenty members of the Group who opposed the war-credits in spite of the resolution of the Group, and delivered a separate declaration, is to be most severely condemned.

This *separate action* is at the same time a rude break with the best traditions of the Labour Movement, and imperils the unity and effectiveness of the Party in the most threatening way. It is not calculated to strengthen the action undertaken by the Group as a whole in the interests of peace, and does not serve the interests of the working-classes in any direction. The result of the French Socialist Congress offers the most cogent proof of this which it is possible to conceive.

Especially the attitude of Comrade Haase deserves the severest disapproval. In participating in the breach of discipline Haase again, and in an even worse manner than by

his issue of "Das Gebot der Stunde," has offended against the duty laid upon him by his office as President of the Party organization.

The Party Committee further declares that *Vorwärts* has not fulfilled its duty as the central organ of the Party. Instead of representing the entire Party, the editorial staff of *Vorwärts* furthers a movement tending to break up the Party. By so doing, *Vorwärts* forfeits all right to be considered the central organ of the German Party.[1]

Ebert succeeds Haase; Liebknecht expelled from the Group.

By now the presiding Committee had come to consist of Majority members only. Not only had Haase resigned the Presidency, but Ledebour and Hoch had resigned their membership. On January 12 the Reichstag Group elected Ebert to be its President in place of Haase. Friedrich Ebert is a man from the working-class, a Heidelberg saddler, of solid, healthy bodily frame, an honest, common-sense bureaucrat, who, if without the showy parts of Scheidemann, might be trusted to discharge the business of the Party, according to his lights, conscientiously and efficiently. To fill up the other vacancies Gradnauer and Krätzig were elected: the latter had been one of the Twenty-two on December 31, 1915, but he is later on found attached to the Majority and not to the "Antrick-Hoch section." On the same day the Group considered the case of Liebknecht. Liebknecht had insisted on heckling the Government by a series of "small interpellations" (*kleine Anfragen*) handed in to the Bureau of the Reichstag, without consulting the Group. The Group now passed the following resolution:—

Whereas Comrade Liebknecht continues to go against the resolutions of the Group and by doing so offends in the grossest

[1] *Vorwärts*, January 9, 1916.

way against his duties as a member of the Group, the Group declares that Liebknecht has thereby forfeited the rights which arise from membership of the Group.

Two days later (January 14) Rühle gave notice to the Presiding Committee of the Group that he associated himself with Liebknecht.[1]

Controversy as to the holding of a *Parteitag*.

This resolution gave rise to a lively controversy in the Social Democrat press. *Vorwärts* contended that it did not fall within the competence of the Party Committee or of the Party Directorate to expel any member from the Group: that could only be done by a Congress of the whole Party (a *Parteitag*). The question of calling a *Parteitag* during the war began to be increasingly agitated. The Minority were against it, contending that it would not be really representative under war conditions. The Majority were largely in favour of it. The Chemnitz *Volksstimme*, for instance, argued in January 1916 that the work of a *Parteitag* would be comparatively simple; it would only have to delegate full powers to the Party Directorate and the Party Committee. Since, as these two bodies were constituted at present, this would imply a final crushing of the Minority and triumph of the officials of the Party, it is obvious why the Majority should desire the summoning of a *Parteitag* for such a purpose, and why the Minority should fight against the proposal. We find the Minority taking up the line that the antagonism between Majority and Minority is essentially an antagonism between the officials of the Party and "the masses." It is only, they contend, within the official

[1] *Vorwärts*, January 16, 1916.

stratum that the Majority is really a majority, not in the Party as a whole.[1]

The controversy between the Majority and the Minority had now come to occupy a considerable space in the Press. "It is plain," said an onlooker, "that the strife within the Social Democrat Party has reached a point at which it can be only bend or break."[2]

Conflict between The Prussian Party *Landes-Kommission* and the Six in the House of Representatives.

In January a conflict occurred between the six adherents of the Minority in the Prussian House of Representatives and the *Landeskommission* of the Social Democrat Party of Prussia. On this *Landeskommission* the Majority commanded the allegiance of the greater number of members. It passed a resolution that the Group in the House of Representatives should follow the policy of the Majority in the Reichstag. In disregard of this, Hirsch, on January 17, read out a declaration in the House of Representatives, embodying the distinctive views of the Minority—the contention that the German Government had given no clear and public expression of its will for peace, "No conquerers and no conquered," full independence of Belgium. The other four of the Group publicly dissociated themselves from this declaration. The *Landeskommission* passed a resolution, by 21 votes to 5, regretting that its instructions had not been followed. The Six replied by a declaration that they did not recognize any right belonging to the *Landeskommission* to prescribe their policy; they owed allegiance only to the resolutions

[1] *Kolnische Volkszeitung*, February 7, 1916, evening.
[2] *Berliner Tageblatt*, January 18, 1916, evening.

passed by national and international *Parteitagen* before the war.

The Trade Unions ranged themselves officially with the Majority. The "General Commission of the Trade Unions of Germany" published in January in its *Korrespondenzblatt* a censure of *Vorwärts* and an appeal to the Party Directorate to take drastic action to restore Party discipline. Naturally this excited the greatest indignation in the Minority. "Such action as the General Commission of the Trade Unions desire the Party Directorate to take would be a gross usurpation of rights which belong exclusively to a *Parteitag*—a fine way to restore Party discipline!" [1]

The Trade Unions and the Minority.

The second President of the German Builders' Union, August Winnig, published during the same month (January), in organs representing the Social Democrat Majority, a fresh declaration of the faith of the Trade Unions:—

> There is one thing which the Trade Unions can never do, that is, stand by inactive, whilst the Minority works to bring over members of the Trade Unions to their side. The cause of the present Minority can never in any circumstances be the cause of the Trade Unions. The spokesmen for the Minority have always looked askance and with mistrust at the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions have become accustomed to that during the course of decades, and have had to adjust themselves to the fact that every advance in their constitution and their methods had to be made, not only without the help of these groups, but often in spite of their opposition. . . .
>
> The Trade Unions will certainly leave it to the Social Democratic Party as a whole to declare, at the General Assembly of the Party, its judgment upon the policy hitherto followed, and the outline of the policy to be followed in the future, but whatever those decisions may be, they

[1] *Vorwärts*, January 16, 1916.

cannot cause the Trade Unions to take up a fundamentally different attitude.

As to the main question, What in future will be the relations of the Trade Unions to the Social Democratic Party? Winnig says:

"The Trade Unions have by no means the ambition to play the rôle which spokesmen for the Minority suppose them to contemplate. The victory of the Minority in the Social Democratic Party would probably compel the Trade Unions to practise complete abstinence in all Party political questions, and to develop *a separate organization and separate methods of their own, to represent the interests of the workers in legislation and administration.*[1]

Legien, speaking at Hamburg in February, complained that the Minority was seeking to deprive the Trade Unions of their recognized rights, that it was carrying into them its schismatic propaganda. One of the principal editors of *Vorwärts,* he declared, had said to him as early as November, 1914: "You may be surprised, but we shall win our way before long into the Trade Unions!"

According to the agreement of 1906 between the Social Democratic Party and the Trade Unions, on all questions of common interest, the governing bodies of the two organizations had come to an understanding. The Trade Unions could not allow the right conferred upon them by this agreement to be taken away, or they would have to cease to regard the Social Democratic Parliamentary Group as representing their interests. "The existing relations between the Social Democratic Party and the Trade Unions," Legien concluded, "we desire to maintain; but supposing the Minority in the Social Democratic Party should ever become the Majority, the policy of the Party would no longer correspond with the interests of the Trade Unions, and the whole question of their relations would have to be raised anew."[2]

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[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* February 25, 1916, morning.
[2] Ibid., February 1, 1916, evening.

Liebknecht in January formally severed his connexion with the Social Democrat Reichstag Group, and was followed by Otto Rühle These two Members from now onward belonged to no Group in the House; they were "free-lances" (*Wilde*—"wild men"—is the German term).[1]

Liebknecht and Ruhle become *Wilde* in the Reichstag.

In Scheidemann's constituency of Solingen the division of opinion was marked. A meeting at which it had been arranged that Scheidemann should address his constituents in January had to be abandoned. This was generally attributed to the strong Minority opposition, but Scheidemann published his correspondence with the local secretary to prove that this explanation of the meeting being abandoned was not true.[2] It seems clear, however, that a very strong Minority opposition existed in the district, though, in this case, curiously enough, it was the officials of the Party who were predominantly on the side of the Minority. The Majority seems to have commanded the support of large sections of the rank and file.[3]

Schiedemann and Solingen.

In February the alarm spread through the Majority that the Minority was secretly preparing a separate organization over the Empire. Its headquarters were stated to be in Duisberg. The organs of the Majority called upon the Central governing body of the Party to take energetic action to squash this movement.[4]

Is the Minority preparing a schism?

[1] *Vossische Zeitung*, February 5, 1916, evening.
[2] *Vorwärts*, February 6, 1916.
[3] *Frankfurter Zeitung*, February 14, 1916, evening.
[4] *Vossische Zeitung*, February 14, evening.

By the help of an analysis of the composition of the Minority, published in the early half of March 1916 by the Majority organ, the *Volksstimme* of Chemnitz, we may obtain a view of the different sections into which the Left of German Social Democracy had come to be divided at this time. The *Volksstimme* distinguished *six* sections:—

Analysis of the Minority.

1. The most extreme section was that represented by Liebknecht and Rühle. Alone of all the sections of German Social Democracy it was opposed on principle (according to the *Volksstimme*) *to all national distinctions.* It wished, at any rate, to make Social Democracy an international organization, in which *no account was taken of nationality.* There was no obligation on the proletarian to defend his country; "defence of the Fatherland" was a "misleading phrase"; the proletarian's only country was the Socialist *Internationale.* This section was commonly known as the "Spartacus" section, from the series of political letters signed "Spartacus" which had emanated from it, and of which more will be said presently.

2. The next section is that of the "International Socialists of Germany," already mentioned in connexion with the Zimmerwald Conference. Its organ, as was said, was the *Lichtstrahlen,* which Julius Borchardt edited, and to which Karl Radek contributed. (This paper was suppressed by the military authorities in April 1916 for the duration of the war.) It agreed with the "Spartacus" section in regarding the bulk of the Minority as weaklings and cowards; it also, like the first section, wished *to keep up the class-war without any regard for the necessities of*

national defence. But it would not (says the Chemnitz *Volksstimme* go as far as the first section in repudiating national distinctions.

[The difference between the first and second section is obviously a fine one. Eduard David, the Majority Leader, in the *Internationale Korrespondenz,* attacked them both together as the "New Party," without making any distinction between them. The masses, David said, who stood behind Liebknecht and the "International Socialists of Germany" were a negligible minority of the people, and they would become a still smaller minority if they ever tried to put their principles in practice. Any attempt to stab the national army in the back during the conflict, by "action" of any sort, would be utterly crushed by the *real* masses of the German people. The doctrine that the proletarian has no fatherland to defend except the *Internationale* was, David said, in flagrant contradiction with what had hitherto been the doctrine both of German Social Democracy and of the *Internationale.*] [1]

3. The section represented by Ledebour and Adolf Hoffmann—that is, the section corresponding with the less extreme section of the Zimmerwalders." It agreed with the first two sections in wishing the *Internationale* to be reconstituted and the class-war to be resumed, but it disagreed with them, and agreed with the rest of German Social Democracy, in *recognizing the principle of national self-defence.*

4. The section represented by Kautsky, editor of *Die Neue Zeit.* [The weekly admitted signed articles of Social Democrats belonging to other sections, and even to the Majority, though the spirit of Kautsky predominated.] This section approved of the action

[1] Quoted, *Berliner Tageblatt,* March 16, evening.

of the Twenty, and wished to revive the *Internationale.* But it dissociated itself from the Zimmerwald Group. Its programme regarded the *International Bureau at the Hague* (formerly at Brussels) *as the proper organ for the revival of the Internationale.*

5. The section of Eduard Bernstein. It recognized the principle of national defence, and did not regard it as necessarily unlawful for Socialists to vote war Budgets. But it objected to German Social Democrats voting money supplies for *this* war. German Socialists ought to show their readiness *to make concessions* to the demands of the Entente Powers. For instance, Alsace-Lorraine ought to be allowed to determine its own fate by a *plébiscite.*

6. The great bulk of the Minority. They approved, theoretically, of defending the country and voting war-credits, but they had determined for the present to refuse to vote war-credits *as a protest against plans of annexation and against abuses in the internal administration of the Empire.*

So far the account of the Chemnitz *Volkstimme.* But if the Minority was divided, the Majority, too, was not homogeneous. According to a Breslau Social Democrat paper, the *Volkswacht,* of June 1915, the Majority fell into two main divisions:—

Analysis of the Majority.

1. The main body, the "block of August 4," who did not deny that the war had its origin in Imperialism, and were ready to do what they could to make a speedy peace possible, but held that it was a prerequisite that a similar attitude[1] should be taken up in the enemy countries as well. [And till the

[1] This probably implies a readiness for peace on the basis of the *status quo,* no Power annexing any territory of which it did not stand possessed in July, 1914.

enemy countries took up the attitude indicated, they were resolved to go on voting war-credits for the German Government.]

2. The section of the Social Democrat "annexationists"—Heine, Schippel, Kloth, etc. They did not themselves admit that they were in agreement with the Conservative and National-Liberal annexationists, but they confessed to holding that the frontiers of Germany, as they were in 1914, could not be regarded as fixed for all time.[1]

A little later (April 1916) the Minority paper, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* gives a more elaborate analysis of the composition of the Majority. It enumerates the following inner groups:—

1. Those who stand for wholesale assimilation to the bourgeois parties, the section whose principles are expounded by Kolb of Karlsruhe, whose "herald" is Peus, and whose best-known representatives are Keil, Feuerstein, and Heymannn in Swabia.

2. Those who during the war have taken a strong Nationalist line—Cohen, Heilmann, Landsberg, David, Heim, Blos, Göhre, Noske, Haenisch, Südekum, Quarck, Oskar Geck.

3. The specifically *Imperialist* Nationalist group—Lensch, Cunow, Heinrich Schulz, Quessel.

4. The Trade Union leaders, also Imperialist—Legien, Bauer, Robert Schmidt, Brey, Deichmann, Kappler, Körsten, Sachse, Schumann, Silberschmidt.

5. Those described as the "plain, practical" set (*Nur-Praktiker*), akin to the preceding group—Böhle, Brühne, Binder.

6. The "Right Centre," consisting of the stalwarts of the old Party, represented by Molkenbuhr, Richard Fischer, Dietz, Pfannkuch, Kühn (now dead), Grenz,

[1] Quoted in the *Berliner Tageblatt,* June 25, 1915.

Ebert (the new President of the Party), Haberland, Wels, Thöne, König.

7. A group closely akin to the preceding, consisting of the clever personalities (*Charakterköpfe*), Scheidemann and Schöpflin.

8. The "Left Centre," forming the transition to the Minority—Spiegel, Giebel, Arthur Hofmann, Davidsohn, Hierl, and J. Hoffmann (of Kaiserslautern).

9. A number of adherents of the Party with a strongly individual standpoint, such as the economist Schippel.

The extremist section of Liebknechtites carried on an active propaganda by a voluminous pamphlet literature secretly distributed. These pamphlets were generally not printed but typewritten. Those which attracted most attention were the "Spartacus" letters. They were circulated amongst a carefully chosen circle of confidential correspondents. It is understood that they were the work of more than one author, but that Liebknecht himself had had a hand in their composition. Some copies of them fell into the possession of the Chemnitz *Volksstimme* and were given publicity. Their salient characteristic was the mocking bitterness of their attack on the sections of the Minority which followed Haase; the letters ridiculed them as weak-kneed and timorous and half-hearted. The Twenty's "breach of discipline" on December 21 had been a very tame affair. The Minority were a heterogeneous lot, who had no real community of principle. The declaration read by Geyer had carefully avoided the word "Imperialism." By its studied ambiguity it came near being an endorsement of the "policy of the Fourth of August." Even the Twenty had joined with the Majority in censuring Liebknecht

The "Spartacus" Letters.

for his series of "small interpellations"! Each carried his faggot with servile zeal to the stake at which the offender against the sanctity of Parliamentarism was to be burned. They showed thereby that they too had fallen victims to parliamentary feeble-mindedness (*Kretinismus*). The accusations brought by "Spartacus" against the German Government were no less thorough-going. The German and Austrian Governments together had "deliberately contrived the murder of Serajevo," and had "kept back the documents bearing on the subject from publicity." The German Government had deceived the Reichstag at the beginning of the war by maintaining silence as to the ultimatum sent to Belgium.

Liebknecht's utterance in the House of Representatives, March 1916.

In March a speech of Liebknecht's in the Prussian House of Representatives added to the agitation. He declared in the course of it that "both in the trenches and at home men ought to drop their weapons and turn against *the common enemy.*" Liebknecht had been expelled from the Social Group in the Reichstag, but in the Prussian House of Representatives he not only belonged to the Social Democrat Group, but spoke as its chosen representative. Even one of those belonging to the four within the Group who supported the policy of the Majority, Conrad Haenisch, voted in the House for Liebknecht's being heard. When the extreme Jingo paper, the *Deutsche Tageszeitung,* called attention to this, Haenisch wrote a letter to the paper to explain that he had done so, not because he agreed with Liebknecht, but because Liebknecht was, as a matter of fact, the speaker elected by the Group, and he wished to maintain Party discipline "to the last limit possible."

Vorwärts was shocked at a Social Democrat leader writing to a paper like *Deutsche Tageszeitung* to justify himself.[1]

A Trade Union leader explains his change of position.

An article contributed about this time by August Winnig, who has already been mentioned as the President of the Builders' Trade Union, to the *Internationale Korrespondenz* does something to explain the light in which those Social Democrats who had practically passed to the Imperialist camp regarded their own transition. The Party before the war, Winnig said, had halted ineffectually between the *revolutionary* and the *parliamentary* method. With the growing material prosperity of the country *the interests of the German working-men had changed;* their interests had come to be more and more in the maintenance of the present state of things, not in revolution. In these circumstances their true policy lay in effectual co-operation with the other parties in political reform, yet they continually hindered such co-operation by playing with the old revolutionary phrases and ideas. The horizon of the German working-class could no longer be limited to Germany; it was now a case of *the conquest of the world-market through German industry.*[2]

A Jingo paper on the growth of the Minority.

An unfriendly observer of the agitation in Social Democrat circles, the Krupp paper, the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung,* whose account of things has to be to some extent discounted because it was concerned to exhibit the dangers of Socialism, bears witness to the growing influence of the Minority.

[1] *Vorwärts,* March 22, 1916.

[2] Quoted in the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* for March 18, 1916, 2nd edition.

The great masses of Social Democrat officials, it says, had been trained in the Extremist school, and had grown accustomed to revolutionary agitation. Since there was no party in which the influence of the lower officials and of the Party Press was so great as in the Social Democrat Party, the poison of "Spartacus" and his like spread rapidly. Their phrases had a familiar sound. It is in these circles of the lower official grades of the organization that the fight between the Majority and the Minority is hottest. The Minority hopes, with the aid of the Extreme Press and the lower officials, to bring the working-class over to its side and throw the Majority out of the saddle. The paper refers to a stormy meeting at Roxdorf, at which one of the Majority leaders, Hué, seems to have had a bad time with the local officials, as an instance of what was now happening in the Party.[1]

[1] *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung* for March 21, 1916.

XI

THE NEW GROUP IN THE REICHSTAG

(MARCH TO MAY 1916)

The vote of March, 1916. Seventeen members vote against the Emergency Budget.

It was upon such an inflamed condition of the German Social Democrat Party that the fresh demand of the Government for war-credits in connection with an Emergency Budget, supervened in March 1916. "This means that, since the Budget for the financial year 1916-17 had not yet been passed by the Reichstag, the Government was to be empowered to carry on for the first months of this year the arrangements prescribed in the money votes of the preceding financial year. The presiding Committee of the Social Democrat Group had proposed that the Emergency Budget should be voted and that Scheidemann, as acting President, should give a short explanation to the effect that this vote was intended simply to allow of the orderly carrying on of business, but not to commit the Group in any way beforehand as to the decision it might take with regard to the Budget proper." At the private meeting of the Group previous to the Reichstag debate "the speakers for the Minority opposed the proposal, on the ground that the Group had hitherto always refused on principle to vote Imperial Emergency Budgets just as much as Budgets proper, and

no reason had been shown why this practice, made obligatory for the Group by repeated resolutions of Party Congresses, should be departed from. The Majority would not accept this argument, but passed the proposal of the presiding Committee, against thirty-three dissentient votes."[1] The two men chosen to speak (Scheidemann was one) again both belonged to the Majority. No opportunity was to be given to the Minority to make its views heard in the House. To seventeen members of the Minority this state of affairs seemed no longer tolerable.[2] They therefore determined among themselves to put up Haase in the House to speak for them and explain why it was that they refused to vote the credits. This plan might have been stopped by the Majority, had they had knowledge of it, and the Seventeen, for this reason, kept their conspiracy a profound secret. When the day of the debate, March 24, came, Haase, on entering the House, broke to Scheidemann that he intended to speak. The Majority were taken completely by surprise. Scheidemann's turn to speak, as representative of the Social Democrat Group, came first in the debate. He explained, as had been arranged, that their voting of the Emergency Budget was not to be taken as committing them with regard to the Budget proper. Presently Haase arose to speak. He declared that he regarded the Emergency Budget as an act of confidence in the Government and must therefore vote against it. He then proceeded to attack the

[1] Bernstein, *Die Neue Zeit* for April 7, 1916, p. 1.

[2] The names of the Seventeen were: Bock, Büchner, Oskar Cohn, Dittmann, Geyer, Haase, Henke, Herzfeld, Horn, Kunert, Ledebour, Schwartz (of Lübeck), Stadthagen, Stolle, Vogtherr, Wurm, Zubeil.

Government's shortcomings and misdeeds, in the food question, in the exercise of the Censorship, in the Law regarding Associations, in the imposition of taxes, and in foreign policy. He passed to the question of the war and made the assertion, as favourite a one with the German Minority as with British pacifists, that neither of the two great opposing coalitions could ever force the other to its knees. "At the end of the tremendous conflict there will probably be neither victors nor vanquished—or rather, only vanquished nations bleeding from a million wounds." He then went on to declare the determination of "us Socialists" to oppose the continuance of the war. More and more, as Haase spoke, the House grew restive. The President repeatedly called him to order. At last, the whole House was in an uproar. The Majority Social Democrats joined in the angry cries against their old chief. Heine and Keil shouted to the ranks of the Majority that Haase was speaking without the sanction of the Group. When the President asked whether it was the wish of the House that Haase should be further heard, four Social Democrats of the Majority helped to pass the resolution which silenced him.[1]

The vote on the Emergency Budget was taken. Besides the Seventeen who, together with Bernstein, voted against the Budget, fourteen members absented themselves.[2]

It was not until after the debate had been concluded that Rühle was able to inform the House, in his own

[1] Bernstein, *Die Neue Zeit* for April 7, 1916, p. 2.

[2] Albrecht, Antrick, Emmel, Edmund Fischer, Hoch, Hofrichter, Hüttmann, Jäckel, Leutert, Raute, Reisshaus, Ryssel, Schmidt (of Meissen), J. Simon. Ryssel in the following May threw in his lot with the Seventeen.

name and the name of his friend Liebknecht, that they also voted against the Emergency Budget because for them the old Social Democrat maxim still held good—"For this system not a man and not a penny!" After the angry storm excited by Haase, the declaration of the two *Wilde* seems to have provoked only hilarity.

Immediately after the meeting in the Reichstag a meeting of the Group was hurriedly got together. The Directorate proposed a resolution to the effect that Haase and the other Seventeen had "by their violation of discipline and bad faith" forfeited "the rights which arise out of membership in the Group." This resolution was carried by 58 votes to 33.[1] The Directorate thereupon informed the Bureau of the Reichstag that the Seventeen were no longer entitled to take part in the Budget Committee (*Haushalts-Ausschuss*), in virtue of belonging to the Social Democrat Group. This was in effect to inflict political death, for it was just at the Budget Committee meetings of the Reichstag that the business of the House was really done. At the plenary meetings any member not attached to a Group would have practically no chance of speaking.

In these circumstances Haase and the other seventeen resolved to constitute themselves a distinct Group in the Reichstag, altogether independent of the old Group. They disputed, indeed, the competence of the Group to deprive them of their rights, and contended, as in the case of Liebknecht, that it was only the Party as a whole, represented in a *Parteitag*, which had the authority to expel a member

[1] Bernstein says, "Mit allen gegen *sechsundzwanzig* Stimmen," *Die Zukunft* for April 21, 1917 (p. 74). This seems a slip of the pen.

from the Group. Their expulsion, however, even if illegal, had to be recognized as a fact and measures taken accordingly. The Seventeen constituted themselves into a new Group, called the *Sozialdemokratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship"). Haase and Ledebour were its two chairmen and a younger man, Wilhelm Dittmann, its secretary. Dittmann is a working-man from the Lübeck district, a cabinet-maker by trade, then forty-one years of age. Eduard Bernstein had not been one of the Seventeen, but he joined the new Group after its constitution, raising their numbers to eighteen. Some twenty-five members of the Minority remained within the old Group; their numbers since then have sunk to twenty.

Did the split of the Social Democrat body in the Reichstag into two Groups mean a split in the Party, a fissure running right through the Empire? This was exactly one of the questions in dispute. The Majority, who naturally represented the action of the Haase Group as an enormity, and drew its consequences in the blackest colours, insisted that if it did not mean an immediate split in the Party, it meant the beginning of a split. It was bound to cripple the power of the working-classes at the very moment when they needed their whole strength to secure their future (*Hamburger Echo*). The Minority, on the other hand, maintained that the division in the Reichstag did not necessarily imply a breach in the Party, and the speakers for the Labour Fellowship carefully avoided in their utterances anything which might seem like an attack on the old Group.

The air, of course, after March 24 was thick with manifestos and resolutions. On March 27 the Party Committee pronounced its condemnation of the

"Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" and all separatist tendencies. It issued an "Appeal to the Party," pointing to "the danger of a complete break-up of the Party" as imminent. The complaint of the Minority, it said, that it was muzzled, had no basis in fact. "Since the beginning of the war, twenty-two members of the Minority and thirty members of the Majority had spoken in the Reichstag." What the Minority really wanted was to pursue a policy wholly incompatible with the resolutions of the Group. Party unity was, of course, a topic upon which the "Appeal" expatiated with fervour and many words.

The Minority published an answer to the "Appeal" in *Vorwärts*. True, twenty-two members of the Minority had spoken in the Reichstag, but they had not, for the most part, spoken on the questions at issue between themselves and the Majority. That is, they were given no opportunity for the expression of their distinctive views—"intolerable constraint of conscience." Two days later (March 30) the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" published their own appeal to the Party and the Reichstag Group on March 31 a new counter-appeal. The Party Press, of course, on both sides, seethed with the controversy.

A Majority writer on the situation.

The Swiss *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* published two articles, by a member of the Majority and a member of the Minority respectively, which illustrate their divergent views at this crisis. The Majority writer argues that the breach in the Reichstag is bound to extend to the Party organizations and the working-class all over the country. It will impede that co-operation of Socialists with the State in the interest of the working-class which the more far-sighted leaders—David,

Heine, Scheidemann, etc.—have come to desire. There is no doubt a certain amount of discontent and war-weariness amongst the German working-classes, due in part to the food regulations. The Extremist section want to exploit this, to "gamble on the momentary discontent" of the population. But their attempt will be a failure. The fact that the great Trade Unions support the Majority is significant. Ultimately the present breach will be noteworthy only as a symptom of the passage of German Social Democracy from its old ground, its "swing to the Right." [1]

A Minority writer on the situation.

The Minority writer is partly concerned to rebut charges brought against the Minority. "A tyrannical extremist Minority," the cry goes, "is trying to force its views upon the Majority." No, it is the Majority who are tyrannical in ejecting Liebknecht and Haase. "The Minority," we are told again, "consists entirely of Intellectuals, doctrinaires, journalists, and lawyers, while the Majority really represents Labour." Not true; Heine, David, Südekum, Peus, on the side of the Majority, are none of them working-men. And then the writer goes on to make an interesting assertion. The real point, he says, on which the disagreement between Majority and Minority turns is kept by the Censorship out of the German Press. Because writers are forbidden to touch on this point, the real question at issue, the defence of their action put forward by the Minority in their papers must necessarily seem lame and inconclusive, and their criticism of the position of the Majority must be feeble. The real question at issue is that of the origins of the war. The whole argument of the Majority from August 4

[1] *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, March 27, 1916.

onwards has been based on the supposition that the Entente Powers are the aggressors and Germany is fighting a war of pure self-defence—such a war as is sanctioned by Social Democrat principles. The Minority, on the other hand—that is, all the forty-four members who refused in December 1915 to vote for war-credits—have become convinced by a study of the diplomatic correspondence and the history of the period before the war that *Germany and Austria were the aggressors.* There is the parting of the ways.[1]

This statement deserves note, but, as will be explained in our concluding examination of the Party controversy, it can hardly be accepted as an account of the Minority position without qualification.

The two Socialist Groups oppose each other in the Reichstag.

On April 6 Haase spoke in the House as President of the new Group, on the second reading of the Emergency Budget. He denounced the Government very much on the same lines, apparently, as on March 24. It was on this occasion that he was so carried away by the habit of Socialist meetings that, in a passionate moment, he addressed the House as "Comrades" (*Genossen*) instead of "Gentlemen," provoking unfortunate mirth. Bernstein proposed a resolution against a ruthless submarine war. Scheidemann spoke, on behalf of the old Social Democrat Group, in opposition to both Haase and Bernstein. His object was to mark off the position of the Social Democrat Majority both from that of the Parties of the Right and from that of the Minority. As against the former, he insisted that the war was not a war of conquest, that Germany was not driven by any hunger for new

[1] *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* April 6, 1916.

lands. Yet this did not mean that he was, like Haase, against all annexations. "One must be politically a babe to suppose that a whole continent can be wrapped in flames, that millions upon millions of men can be killed—and, at the end of it all, *no single boundary-stone be shifted,* no boundary-stone set up by any old diplomat long since gone to dust." Scheidemann's qualified subscription to the idea of annexations was received in the House (the report tells us) with "strong and continued applause." His phrase about the boundary-stones was quoted over and over again in the months to come. Later on, as we shall see, Scheidemann modified his attitude and was brought to speak as plainly as Haase did then against annexations of any kind. That was the effect of the protracted pressure of the leagued democratic Powers upon Germany. It is important to note that the contraction of the demands of the Social Democrat Majority was due not to inner principle, but to the course of outside events, which made the chance of Germany's getting more seem small. Scheidemann also on April 6, 1916, supported the demand for a more rigorous submarine war, against Bernstein. "We must use the submarine weapon, too, in our defence, to save our women and children from being starved to death." And again we are told that the House received his declaration with a storm of applause.

On April 15 the new "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" made itself prominent in the House by bringing in a motion for the more rapid discharge of men sick or unfit for service, which was passed by 142 to 110. Even here, however, we are on controversial ground, as between Majority and Minority. The official organ of the Trade Unions (the *Korrespondenzblatt*) strongly condemns the motion as

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being really inimical to the interests of the men concerned. The Trade Unions had always, it says, been in favour of the sick and unfit being kept in the army till they had been properly cured or trained for other occupation as the case might be.[1]

A second conference of the "Zimmerwalders" was held from April 24 to April 26. This time the place of meeting was not Zimmerwald, but Kiental, in the Bernese Oberland. It was presided over by the German-Swiss Socialist, Robert Grimm, editor of the *Berner Tagwacht,* and some forty odd individuals attended it from Germany, France, Italy, Serbia, as well as three other Swiss Socialists besides Robert Grimm. It is hardly correct to describe these individuals as "delegates," since they came without mandates from organized parties in their respective countries.[2] Three French deputies, belonging to the French Socialist Minority—Alexandre Blanc, Raffin-Dugens and Pierre Brizon—got by some stratagem or other across the frontier.[3] The Germans attending the Conference numbered seven—Adolf Hoffmann, Hermann Heissner, Dr. Ernst Meyer, a Comrade from Bremen, a Comrade from Frankfurt, and two women. These seven included representatives both of the "Ledebour section"

The Kiental Conference April, 1916.

[1] *Korrespondenzblatt der Generalkomission der Gewerkschaften Deutschlands,* April 15, 1916.

[2] "Vor allem ist die Libre Federation im Irrtum, wenn sie von 'Delegierten' spricht. Weder die deutschen noch die französischen Teilnehmer an der Kientaler Konferenz waren 'delegiert.' Sämtlich waren sie dort nur in ihrer Rolle als sozialistische Führer und Vertrauensmänner" (*Internationale Korrespondenz,* June 17, 1916, p. 157).

[3] Raffin-Dugens obtained passports for himself and his wife on the pretext that they wished to go to a sanatorium in Switzerland.

of the "Zimmerwalders" (Adolf Hoffmann) and of the "International Socialists of Germany." Bernstein, Haase, and Kautsky received invitations, but Bernstein sent no reply, and Haase and Kautsky both declined on the ground that they adhered to the International Socialist Bureau of The Hague. Several other members of the Social Democrat Reichstag Group, who tried to go to the Conference, were prevented by the German Government from crossing the frontier. Beside the seven representing Germany, Karl Radek was present, as a representative of the Socialist Party of Russian Poland. The Dutch Socialists who had wished to attend, but were refused passports, asked him to act also as their representative, but this was ruled out, since the Conference did not recognize double mandates.[1] Amongst the representatives of Russian Socialism was Lenin.

The Conference of pacifists was apparently anything but pacific. Lenin and the Swiss seem to have introduced a turbulent element.[2] Between the French and the Germans there were heated altercations. Adolf Hoffmann repudiated obstinately the French contention that the blame for the war rested exclusively upon the German Government. On the other hand, the French were vehemently indignant when the Germans invited them to initiate a revolutionary movement in France "at the moment," says *La Bataille,* "when the French proletariat was defending at Verdun the soil of the Revolution with heroic energy!" In fact, so high did passions run amongst these angry pacifists

[1] *Internationale Korrespondenz,* May 31, 1916, p. 126.

[2] Die Verhandlungen . . . waren angesichts der Haltung der Schweizer und einiger Slawen, wie Lenin und Radek, nichts weniger als harmonisch" (*Internationale Korrespondenz,* May 23, 1916, p. 110).

that Blanc and Raffin-Dugens ostentatiously shook the dust of Kiental from their feet in the middle of the Conference, and Brizon, who remained, more than once threatened to go.

The Zimmerwald movement had been started in the first instance in rivalry to the International Socialist Bureau of The Hague, and the question of the relation of the "Zimmerwalders" to the other body was the main one before the Kiental Conference. This matter, too, gave rise to "passionate" (*leidenschaftlich*) debates. Amongst the Germans Adolf Hoffmann advocated friendly relations, even though he considered that the Bureau at The Hague had in some respects failed in its duty. On the other hand, the "Zimmerwald" "Left" denounced the Bureau at The Hague as being partial to the Entente Powers, "a tool of French and Belgian *patriots*." They wished to throw over the "Second *Internationale*" as dead, and found a "Third *Internationale*." At last a compromise was found in a resolution, which combined severe censure of the International Socialist Bureau with the plan of holding another Conference when the I.S.B. had its next meeting, so as to determine then what line to take.

Dr. Ernst Meyer, one of the Germans present, contributed an article to *Die Neue Zeit* (May 19, 1916), surveying the work of the Kiental Conference, with a view to showing that the flood of talk poured out in those three days had not been without profit. The growth, he says, of Socialist Majorities and Minorities in most countries since Zimmerwald had confronted Social Democracy with new problems. There had been a movement of thought, due to the experiences of recent months, which allowed questions which could not have been raised at Zimmerwald without breaking

up the Conference to be debated (even if no unanimity was reached) at Kiental. These questions were mainly concerned with the attitude of the proletariat to peace and war.

Before parting, the Conference drew up a Manifesto, the first draft of which was due to Brizon. It was amended by the Conference to meet the views of the Left, who, even so, were not particularly pleased with it, and only agreed to it out of deference to Brizon.[1] It was addressed to the proletariat of all countries, and exhorted them to work for ending the war. It denounced both militarism and the "democratic hypocrisy" that the war was being fought for the liberation of small nations. It specified plainly what was required of Socialist Members of Parliament in the matter of voting war-credits, and laid it down that a prerequisite to any durable peace was the triumph of Socialism.

May-day 1916; arrest of Liebknecht.

On May-day 1916, the second May-day of the war, we gather that the *Burgfriede,* with which the war had opened, had worn very thin. At Leipzig, wherever Comrades assembled, they found a strong force of police on the ground and secret police shadowing them everywhere. The police accompanied the party to Oetzsch, went with them to the Gasthof-zur-Linde, sat at a table, drank beer, and—had nothing else to do. It was all an excellent commentary on the well-known saying: "Henceforth I know no parties any more; I know only Germans."[2]

May-day, however, gave rise to one incident of consequence. Karl Liebknecht was arrested while in the act of taking part in a demonstration in the Pots-

[1] *Internationale Korrespondenz,* May 31, 1916, p. 126.
[2] *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* May 2, 1916.

damer-Platz in Berlin. He had been inciting his fellow-demonstrators with cries of "Down with the war!" "Down with the Government!" When arrested, Liebknecht contended that his action did not constitute treason (*Landesverrat*). He admitted that, having been enrolled in the non-combatant forces (as an *Armierungssoldat*), he ought to have been in uniform. According to the police, he resisted arrest, and had to be dragged away by force. A pamphlet written by himself, of which 1,340 copies were found in his possession ready for distribution, called for the resumption of the class-war and a fight against the Government. The Government's lust for dominion was responsible for the war. The workers must not tolerate the human slaughter any longer. The peoples must reach hands to one another across the frontiers and battlefields.

The Reichstag refuses to demand Liebknecht's release.

The case of Liebknecht occupied during the next few weeks considerable public attention. Even before May-day he had made a speech in the Reichstag which caused widespread indignation (April 8). He had represented the fourth German War Loan as a colossal swindle. His speech was continually broken by furious interruptions. At last one Member, Hubrich (Progressive), wrenched Liebknecht's manuscript out of his hand and flung it upon the floor of the House. Liebknecht stepped down from the tribunal to pick it up, and was immediately told by the President, amid approving clamour all over the House, that since he had left the tribune, his speech must be considered at an end. His protests were drowned in general tumult and the debate was closed.

A discussion after this had arisen in the non-Socialist Press as to whether the Reichstag ought not to

amend its standing rules in such a way as to prevent similar scandals in the future. Then came Liebknecht's arrest. It was certain that a member of the Reichstag was protected by privilege against prosecution by the civil authorities for the expression of political views, but Liebknecht was a soldier, amenable to military jurisdiction, and whether he was equally protected against action by the military authorities was a point on which conflicting opinions were maintained.

On May 10, in the Standing Orders Committee of the Reichstag, the question came up before the House whether the Reichstag should demand Liebknecht's release and the suspension of the proceedings against him during the term of the session. The non-Socialist Groups were against the Reichstag taking any action on his behalf, in view of his manifest treason. Haase had no opportunity of stating the views of the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" in the Committee. Both the speakers for the Social Democrat Group took the line of repudiating all sympathy with Liebknecht's views, declaring him to be hare-brained, hysterical, neurasthenic, ridden by ideas he was incapable of gauging and prone to violent words, but not really dangerous. They argued that it would be bad policy to make such a man a martyr, and that the House ought to insist upon the privileges of its members, whatever Liebknecht personally might be worth, out of regard for its own rights. Only the Polish delegate supported the Social Democrat speakers, and the Budget committee, by a large majority, decided to report to the House adversely to any action on Liebknecht's behalf.

Next day (May 11) the matter came before the full House. Landsberg spoke for the Social Democrats and repeated the arguments used in the Budget

Committee. Haase spoke for the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" and defended Liebknecht against the charge of treason. Liebknecht's aim, he said, was simply that the German people should bring pressure upon the German Government to end the war, just as he desired pressure to be brought by the other belligerent peoples upon their respective Governments. The House decided by 229 votes to 111 to abandon Liebknecht to his fate. From the benches of the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" came cries of "*Pfui!*" ("Shame!") when the result was announced. Rühle, Liebknecht's former associate, gave some expression of his disgust, for which the President of the House called him to order. Liebknecht's trial was conducted *in camera* to avoid popular demonstrations. On June 28, 1916, he was condemned to two years, six months, and three days penal servitude and to removal from the army "for attempted treason in war, aggravated disobedience and contumacy to the authority of the State." His sentence was declared to be the lightest possible for his offence, because the Court considered that Liebknecht had not acted from dishonourable motives but from political fanaticism. His appeal against this sentence was dismissed and the sentence finally confirmed by the military tribunal on August 23.[1]

The pamphlet campaign of the Extremists.

As a specimen of the secret pamphlet literature with which the Extremist sections were now working, we give the following extract from one entitled "A Policy for Curs (Hundepolitik)," which was circulated in the middle of June 1916:—

David, Landsberg, and Scheidemann have surpassed all State-attorneys, put all chiefs of the police to shame, made

[1] *Zévaès*, p. 161.

the late Tessendorf of blessed memory seem an innocent orphan-child by comparison. It would have been a bad look-out if these rascals had had the administering of Bismarck's Law against the Socialists. They would have lodged the whole body of Social Democrat Members of the Reichstag and editors in gaol; they would have sent our August Bebel, our old Liebknecht, to the gallows. . . . He is a cur who licks the boots of the rulers, the boot which has dispensed him nothing but kicks for years past. He is a cur who, while his mouth is stuck into the muzzle of the State of Siege, goes on cheerfully wagging his tail and gazes fawning and whinging into the eyes of the gentlemen of the military dictatorship. He is a cur who bays the more furiously at a man who is not present, a man chained in prison, and, in so doing, does obedient service to those who for the moment hold the power. He is a cur who, at the word of the Government, abjures, calumniates, treads in the mud the whole past of his Party, everything that has been sacred to it for a generation. Curs—that, then, and nothing else—is what David, Landsberg & Co. are, and they will certainly, when the day of reckoning comes, get the kick they deserve from the working-men of Germany.[1]

It was not the Majority only which the Extremists attacked. Even the main body of the Minority, who followed the leading of Haase, got few good words from them.

An article which a Majority Social Democrat, Hugo Poetzsch, contributes to the *Internationale Korrespondenz* on May 9 illustrates the tribulations of the Minority at this time from their attacks, especially from the "Spartacus" Group. This Group, Poetzsch says, is gaining in Berlin hand over hand. A special attempt is being made to capture the young men; pamphlets are disseminated by *office-bearers* on pay-day evenings. To-day it is no longer the Minority Leaders—Haase, Ledebour, Hoffmann—who push the

[1] Berger, pp. 82, 83.

faction; they are the pushed. Lebedour and Hoffmann had recently issued a pamphlet in which they complained of the attempt of the Extremists to split the Minority. In January the "Spartacus" Group had held a secret confabulation in Berlin with Extremist Comrades from other parts of Germany, with a view to forming a "Third *Internationale,*" without letting the Minority leaders know anything about it. These latter only heard of it afterwards indirectly by way of Berne. They say in their pamphlet that their "self-respect" forbids their having further dealings with people who have gone behind their backs in this way. Of course, the Majority writers recount all this in the spirit of malicious triumph. The Minority are only reaping what they sowed. They encouraged Liebknecht and Borchardt, and now they are themselves chastised with the same rods they used for the backs of the Majority. They broke the discipline of the Party, and now they find the "Spartacus" Letters saying: "Having broken away from one discipline, are we going to accept another crippling one? No, twice no!" It is too late now for the Minority leaders to try to save the situation by severing their connection with the Extremists. The Party in Berlin has already gone to pieces.

XII

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN MAJORITY AND MINORITY

(MAY TO SEPTEMBER 1916)

Unrest and repression.

In the spring and summer of 1916, under the pressure of the blockade, there was a certain amount of darkly heaving unrest throughout the working-class of Germany. The schism in German Social Democracy extended to some extent even to the Trade Unions. As a whole, indeed, the Trade Unions stood solidly with the Majority, but some Trade Unionist Leaders—Horn (Glass-workers' Union), Geyer (Tobacco-workers' Union), the veteran Bock (Shoemakers' Union)—joined the Social Democrat Labour Fellowship. In Scheidemann's constituency of Solingen, the Social Democrat General Assembly passed a resolution adverse to the Majority and justifying the attitude of the Eighteen who had formed the new body. This general unrest added strength to the Extremist section of Social Democracy. In the Prussian Landtag, Hofer, an associate of Liebknecht's, said:—

> The property-owning classes are themselves astonished at the people's patience. But the masses are beginning to stir. They are saying that if the Russians had come to Berlin, it could not have been worse. Now you fear lest the flames of sedition and revolution be kindled. You want to prevent it. But you are always too late. People know that it is a case of their being starved at home and killed abroad—for the interests of a small set of capitalists.

At the end of May the leaders of the Majority thought it well to guard against the infection of men at the front with Minority views by bringing out a new fortnightly paper, strongly Nationalist and friendly to the Government, especially for circulation among men on active service—the *Sozialdemokratische Feldpost.* Twenty thousand copies of its first number were printed.

On the side of the Government, meantime, repressive measures against Minority Social Democrats increased. According to the declaration of Dittmann in the Reichstag on May 24, Comrades, even when themselves members of the Reichstag, were subjected to every species of petty persecution. Dr. Herzfeld was prevented from crossing the frontier into Switzerland, although he had a regular passport, and was offensively searched. Another Social Democrat, Haegy, an Alsatian, when he ventured to complain of the "punitive arrest" of an editor, was told that he himself would be arrested or placed under police supervision, and finally was called up to the colours and sent to the Eastern front. We also heard of a certain Klüss, who had been arrested for making a speech against the war at a public meeting and had not been brought to trial till a month later. Twenty-two Socialist meetings, after they had been arranged for, were suppressed by the police in a single Berlin constituency.

The Majority votes against the Budget, June 7, 1916.

In June even the Majority Group of Social Democrats felt obliged, by the anger in the country at the food shortage and the Government's reactionary policy, to vote, as of old, against the Budget (June 7). Both the Majority Group and the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" on this occasion voted together against the Budget, in opposition to all the rest of the House. This, however, was intended by the Majority to be

merely a demonstration of discontent with the Government, not a step to hamper the prosecution of the war. For when, after the passing of the Budget, the Government asked for an extraordinary credit of 12,000 millions of marks for the war, the Groups again divided. The "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship" and the free lance, Rühle, voted against the credit, the twenty-two members of the Social Democrat Group who had formed part of the Minority in August 1915 left the Chamber before the voting took place, and the rest of the Social Democrat Group voted for the credit.

If, however, on June 7, the two Socialist Groups voted together, there was more than one occasion about this time when the Social Democrat Labour Fellowship opposed measures of internal legislation which had the support of the old Party.

Minority votes against Majority on internal questions.

On June 3 a Bill for settling disabled soldiers on the land, with capital supplied by the State (*Kapital-abfindungsgesetz*), was passed by the Reichstag. The "Labour Fellowship" voted against it. "We reject the Bill," Henke explained in the House, "firstly because it confers large powers upon the army administration, which will lead to unjustified tutelage; secondly because it binds the working-man to the soil and thereby restricts liberty of migration."

On June 5 a Bill for amending the existing law as to Trade Unions (*Reichsvereinsgesetz*) was passed with the support of the Majority. The "Labour Fellowship," *in company with the Conservative Right,* voted against it. They denounced it as not only inadequate but as actually dangerous. The two extremes voted, of course, together for opposite reasons. The measure in question represented a compromise. To the Conservatives it was abhorrent because it made even a small

concession to Socialist demands; to the Minority Socialists it was a sham because it did not go far enough.

On the same day the "Labour Fellowship," this time together with five Conservative members, voted against the law for taxing war-profits (*Kriegsgewinnsteuergesetz*), which was taxed by the votes of the other Parties, including the Majority Social Democrats. The effect of the law, said Haase, would be to prevent a real taxation of war-profits, such as was demanded by the great mass of the people.

Such action on the part of the Minority has added a fresh count to the tale of reproaches cast up against them by the Majority. Whether the Minority were right or wrong in holding that the legislation in question would not work out in the long run to the advantage of the working-class, could be decided only by a detailed study of the German laws in reference to conditions in Germany, for which few Englishmen have the necessary knowledge. In any case, it had become possible to represent the Minority as having opposed even useful social legislation in their rancour against the Majority —or at any rate in their unpractical doctrinarianism. The fact that they had been seen voting side by side with Conservatives on the last two occasions made it all the easier to display their action in an ugly light.

The Party Directorate takes step to obtain control of *Vorwärts*. Shall the Minority withhold subscriptions?

We have in May 1916 the first conspicuous signs of an effort on the part of the Majority to wrest the central Party paper, *Vorwärts*, out of the control of the Minority. Although the representatives of the Minority were predominant in the editorial body, the Majority, too, had representatives on the staff of the paper. One of these was the manager, Richard Fischer. Acting on a resolution of the Party Directorate, Fischer wrote

to one of the editors who belonged to the Minority, Dr. Meyer, dismissing him from his post. But the Editorial Committee of the paper supported Dr. Meyer, disputed Fischer's authority, and refused to comply with his orders. The Editorial Committee was supported by the Berlin Press Committee (*Presskommission*)—a body elected by the Berlin Social Democrat organizations to control *Vorwärts*. Berlin, as has been said, was a stronghold of the Minority, and the action of the Party Directorate and Fischer was represented as a "fresh infringement of the Party Constitution."

Dr. Meyer's offence was that he had helped to circulate a suggestion, now becoming rife in Minority circles, that pressure should be brought to bear upon the central directing body of the Party by the local organizations' stopping payment of their dues. He was believed to have written or inspired a pamphlet called "The Lessons of March 24," which was circulated at this time and created considerable sensation. It urged vehemently this extreme policy:—

Comrades! Bestir yourselves to conquer back the Party which has been made an appendage of bourgeois Imperialism by a clique of traitors in high office. Do not put up with the traitors' *coup d'état* of March 24. State clearly that you no longer recognize the David-Heine-Noske Majority as representatives of Social Democracy; demand clearly that the traitors shall lay down the mandate they have abused. Cease to allow your party funds to be put at the disposal of this Party Directorate, since they use your hard-earned pence to promote a policy, to give out writings, which aim at making you the patient cannon-fodder of Imperialism and serve to prolong this slaughter of nations. The local branches must resolve to lock the Party chests against the Directorate of the Scheidemann-Ebert set, who make over the pence of the people to the Moloch of the world-war, to a Government which means famine and the State of Siege.[1]

[1] Berger, pp. 85, 86. Berger gives what professes to be a reprint of the whole pamphlet in full.

The bulk of the Minority, as represented by *Vorwärts,* shrank from advocating an action the consequences of which would be a complete disruption of the Party. A *Parteitag,* invested with the authority of the Party as a whole, which was finally to adjudicate all the controversies at issue in the Party and re-establish unity, would hereby becom impossible, since local organizations which had failed to pay their dues would have thereby excluded themselves from being represented.[1]

These arguments were met by Franz Mehring, from the point of view of the Extremists. He argued that when the day of the *Parteitag* arrived, the local organizations might pay their arrears to the Congress itself and so qualify for representation. The Directorate, he said, had broken all of the rules of the Party Constitution, and the only way by which the local organizations could dissociate themselves from complicity was by refusing contributions.[2]

The action of the Directorate in regard to *Vorwärts* aggravated the seething anger in the Minority.

The Minority angry: the case of Tetlow-Beeskow.

The Directorate, besides its attempt to expel Dr. Meyer, had now insisted that it should have a representative upon the Editorial Board with the power of veto. The man chosen for this invidious post—"censor," as he was currently called in the Party—was Hermann Müller, he who just before the outbreak of war had gone as delegate to Paris. The feeling against the Majority was displayed at the end of May by a resolution passed in the constituency of Niederbarnim (Greater Berlin) by 113 votes to 16. The Central Directorate of Greater Berlin determined on May 26,

[1] *Vorwärts,* May 29, 1916.

[2] *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung,* June 13, 1916.

with 12 dissentient votes, to bring forward a motion to expel the Trade Unionist leader, Legien, from the Party. Legien was reported to have expressed himself in injurious terms as to various leading persons of the Minority—one he had spoken of as a "police informer," of another as an "idiot," of another as a "petroleum Jew."

In another constituency of Greater Berlin, Teltow-Beeskow, represented in the Reichstag by Zubeil, one of the "Labour Fellowship," it came to an open rupture. The local executive was on the side of the Majority, the mass of the Social Democrats in the constituency on that of the Minority. At two of the villages included in the constituency, Neu-Kölln and Lichterfelde, the local organizations had carried out the suggestion just noted and resolved to withhold the contributions due from them to the Party chest. A pamphlet was circulated in the constituency, denouncing Scheidemann and the Majority. The action of the Directorate with regard to *Vorwärts* was described as "unscrupulous," and as showing that the Directorate was striving after a "dictatorship," in order to "turn the mass of the party into beasts of burden in the service of Capitalism and Imperialism."

When the General Assembly of the constituency took place on June 18, trouble arose over the question whether the delegates from Lichterfelde were to be admitted. The chairman and the majority of the local executive were for excluding them, but they were overruled by the vote of the Assembly. Upon this they left the hall in a body. The Assembly, *minus* those who had left (thirteen delegates) and one delegate who was absent, then proceeded to declare the old executive deposed and to elect a new provisional

executive, who should summon a new General Assembly. One of those elected to this new executive was Rosa Luxemburg, who belonged, as has been mentioned, to Mehring's section of Extremists. The comments on the episode which the editors of *Vorwärts* desired to publish were vetoed by Müller.[1]

The constituency, however, although on the side of the Minority, was not prepared to go the lengths of the Extremist sections. When Rosa Luxemburg moved that the contributions due to the central Party chest should be withheld, her proposal was rejected by a large majority. The old executive continued to claim to be the only legitimate one, and their claim was naturally supported by the Party Directorate. They still had some following in the constituency; we hear of them at the end of August getting up a meeting at which Dr. David spoke to some 1,000 persons and to which only adherents of the Majority were admitted. The local organizations would have nothing to do with it. There was thus a definite split in the Party in Teltow-Beeskow.[1]

Vote of credits, June 1916.

Meantime, another vote of credits—this time 12,000 million of marks—had been passed in the Reichstag (June 7). But now such a vote no longer produced any fresh disturbance in the Social Democrat Party. With the division into two Groups, the question had been settled for each in its own way. The old Group voted for the credits, as before, and the "Labour Fellowship" voted against them. The speaker for each Group justified its action by the arguments which had now been so often repeated.

[1] *Vorwärts*, June 24, 1916.

On June 21, Scheidemann, at a meeting composed mainly of non-Socialists, in Breslau, made a statement which produced a considerable sensation in Germany. He stated that a year before, after the Six Associations had presented their memorandum to the Chancellor, he and certain other Social Democrats had waited on the Chancellor and heard from his own lips an assurance that he disapproved of "all such schemes." Ledebour, who had come to the same meeting, without the knowledge of the local Social Democrat officials, though probably on an understanding with the Minority faction in the place, stood up after Scheidemann had spoken, to point out that what Scheidemann had said was no revelation; everybody knew that Bethmann Hollweg did not approve of the particular plans of the Six Associations; but his utterances in the Reichstag proved that he was not against all annexations; the difference was only one of degree. The sudden emergence of Ledebour to combat a Social Democrat speaker before a mixed assembly was declared on the side of the Majority to be scandalous; notice of his speech was generally suppressed in the papers—only the extreme Minority *Bremer Bürger- Zeitung* had a summary of it—whilst Scheidemann's was published all over the Empire, and became the topic of the hour. The Minority papers followed in their comments the same line which Ledebour had taken.

Scheidemann's speech at Breslau, June 21.

The reason which had ostensibly brought Scheidemann to these parts was the purpose of supporting the candidature of Hermann Müller for the seat of Reichenbach-Neurode in the Reichstag, left vacant by the death of its former member, a Social Democrat named Kühn.

The Reichenbach-Neurode Election.

The Minority opposition seems to have been becoming formidable in the district, though no candidate was put up against Müller. Müller succeeded to the seat of Kühn without an electoral contest; but seven votes were given in favour of a Conservative, Krause, by some sort of error, since Krause apparently was not standing. The election caused a good deal of talk at the time, owing to a false statement of the facts circulated by the Wolff Bureau. It was represented that in a contest between a Social Democrat—some papers said a Minority Social Democrat!—and a Conservative, the Social Democrat had won a great victory.[1]

Demonstrations in favour of Liebknecht.

The unrest in the German working-class was shown at the end of June by demonstrations which took place in various places to protest against Liebknecht's conviction. We hear of such processions through the streets and minor collisions with the police—on June 26, the day when Liebknecht's trial became known—in Berlin, Bremen, Stuttgart, and Brunswick.

Trouble in Frankfurt.

About the same time a similar trouble to that which had occurred in the Teltow-Beeskow constituency showed itself in the Frankfurt district. Here the branch of the Social Democrat Party for the city of Frankfurt itself was on the side of the Majority, whereas the branches in the district around, constituting the bulk of the district organization, were on the side of the Minority. The quarrel between the Frankfurt City and the district came to be focused upon the question of the control of the local Social Democrat organ the *Frankfurter Volksstimme.* The Frankfurt branch refused to pay its dues to the district organization—

[1] *Vossische Zeitung,* June 28, 1916.

doing, that is to say, exactly what the Majority reproached the Extremist Minority sections for advocating. In the Directorate of the district organization itself certain members held by the Majority. At a meeting held at the end of June, the district organization declared that these members had forfeited their position, and they were replaced by others. It was announced two days later that the resolution of the Frankfurt branch to suspend the payment of its dues had been rescinded at the instance of the Party Directorate.

The revolt of Greater Berlin; Minority in Hamburg.

A much more serious blow to the Majority was the open revolt of Greater Berlin. The various local branches of Greater Berlin are united in one *Verband* with a common (Berlin) Central Directorate. This Berlin Central Directorate acted as the executive organ for the Socialist Board of all Prussia. Besides this, the Berlin branches, in association with the Directorate of the whole Party in the German Empire, controlled *Vorwärts* by a specially appointed "Press Committee." Part of the confusion at this moment was due to the fact that *Vorwärts* has a double character. It is both the *local* Berlin Socialist organ and the Central organ for the whole German Socialist Party. At a time, therefore, when Berlin Social Democracy was in violent antagonism to the official policy of the Party, the double control of *Vorwärts* naturally led to an impossible situation. Early in June a meeting of the delegates from all the Berlin local branches was called together, in order to consider the question of electing a new Berlin Central Directorate instead of the old Directorate which supported the Majority. In 1915, the Social Democrat local branches had determined that there should be no new elections

[1] *Vorwärts*, July 1, 1916.

till after the war: hence the action of Greater Berlin was all the more startling. The Party Directorate issued a condemnation of the proceedings; the Socialist Board for Prussia, in which the Majority was dominant, declared that it would no longer recognize the Berlin Central Directorate as its executive organ, if the Directorate was reconstituted as the local branches proposed. These declarations had no effect; on June 25 a meeting of delegates from all the Berlin local branches dismissed the existing Directorate and chose a new Directorate of Minority, or even Extremist, complexion.

Even in some of the Hamburg districts the Minority began to gain ground. The local Social Democrat paper, the *Hamburger Echo,* had, as has been stated, gone strongly with the Majority. In the Hanam district we hear of meetings in July, at which resolutions were carried by large majorities, declaring the line taken by the paper to be incompatible with Socialism.[1]

Shall a Parteitag be summoned? Not a Partietag but a Conference.

The idea of summoning a *Parteitag* for the Empire now began to be put forward again from the side of the Majority. The Minority still opposed it vigorously; it was a suggestion emanating, they said, from Imperialist Socialists like Kolb and David, in order to crush the Minority by a snap vote, while the men were in the trenches. The defeated side would never recognize the authority of a *Parteitag* held under present conditions. Yet the Party Directorate were in favour of the proposal, and at a meeting with the Party Committee (a consultative body, as has been said, of delegates from the different branches all over the Empire) warmly backed up Timm of Munich

[1] *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung,* July 8, 1916.

when he moved a resolution to this effect, and persuaded the Party Committee to put the question on its agenda for its meeting of July 20.[1] On the date specified the meeting was held—in the Reichstag building, so as to be safe, we are told, from invasion by Socialist Amazons animated by the spirit of Rosa Luxemburg and Luise Zietz. The Party Committee, contrary to what had been predicted in the Minority Press, decided, with only twelve dissentient votes, that the time was not propitious for the summoning of a *Parteitag,* but that it would be well to call a *Conference* of delegates from the local branches all over the Empire (a *Reichskonferenz*) in order to arrest the growing disorganization.[2]

Embitterment of Party controversies: the Extremist peril.

The controversy between Majority and Minority as to the summoning of a *Parteitag* filled the Social Democrat Press during the next weeks. Passions were running high. "The enmity of the different nations—German, French, English, Russian—to each other," says a writer in the Majority weekly, *Die Glocke,* "is child's play compared with the mad fury which at the present time excites German Social Democrats against German Social Democrats. If we have not yet turned machine-guns on to each other, it is not for want of will!"[3] There was real alarm lest the Extremists, growing ever in power, might bring about the General Strike which Socialists had talked of

[1] *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* July 14, 1916; *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung,* July 17, 1916.

[2] *Vorwärts,* July 23, 1916. The idea of a *Reichskonferenz* as a substitute for a *Parteitag* seems really to have originated with the Minority. The Majority *Arbeiterzeitung* of Dortmund had attacked Haase on January 7, 1916, for putting forward this idea. It was now the Party Committee who put it forward, and the Minority who were shy of it.

[3] *Die Glocke,* July 15, 1916, p. 638.

before the war. The Majority paper, the *Volksstimme* of Chemnitz, uttered a warning:—

People are going about the country preaching a General Strike. . . . Of course all this is stark madness. A General Strike during the war, at the critical moment of the war, is something absolutely impossible, because the German working-class is mature enough to see things in their true connexions. German working-men will not make a General Strike, to bring destruction upon their comrades at the front. They will not make a General Strike for the benefit of the Tsar! Even if isolated, undisciplined, and hare-brained individuals let themselves be persuaded to make little experiments in this direction, there is no reason why one should feel nervous. The preachers of the General Strike may cause misfortune, very much misfortune perhaps, in a limited field, but not in the war as a whole. The mass of the German working-class, which has passed through the school of the Social Democrat Party, and which, for that reason, does not fall a blind victim to every fine-sounding catchword, has a deep understanding for the vital needs of the German people; it will not burden itself with the bitter consciousness in history of having stabbed its brethren in the back as they fought. To those few, however, who are not quite deaf to the seductions of discreditable agents, let so much be said: Do not suffer any one to persuade you that by the propaganda for a General Strike you can bring about peace. . . . You can achieve nothing but your own eternal unhappiness, and the unhappiness of those you mislead. Do not carry things to such a pass that the nation, fighting in its self-defence, has to defend itself against *you!* Beware![1]

The official peace campaign of the Party Directorate.

In the summer of 1916, after the *Fronde* against the Chancellor had developed and the National Committee for an Honourable Peace had been formed to win public opinion for the Government and educate the German people with regard to "moderate" war-aims, the prohibition against discussing

[1] Quoted in the *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, July 15, 1916.

war-aims became obsolete. The Social Democrat Party Directorate felt it the right moment to put forth a public declaration of the war-aims of German Social Democracy—that is, of course, of the Majority. In view of Minority agitation, their Manifesto, like their Manifesto of June 1915, laid stress on their readiness for a peace on the *status quo* basis (the term is not used, but this is what the document points to), and their opposition to all annexations. They laid the blame for the continuance of the will for war in enemy countries upon the programmes of the German Chauvinists. They visited the local branches of the Party throughout the Empire, to arrange for public meetings in which the Social Democrat attitude in the question of war-aims and peace-aims should be defined. "We further request that a petition be prepared for signature, in which a peace shall be demanded, which shall ensure friendship with our neighbours and guarantee the territorial integrity, independence, and economic development of our country." The new Manifesto was issued from Berlin on August 11, 1916. It was adversely criticized by Lensch, from his present Imperialist standpoint as a "deplorable move in the direction of the Minority," in an article in *Die Glocke*, August 19. Lensch hoped that this feebleness on the part of the Directorate might be only a passing incident. On the other hand, when the adherents of the Majority bestirred themselves to obtain signatures for the peace petition throughout the country, those of the Minority stood aloof. The "peace-meetings" took place during August at a number of places, some of them getting exceptionally large audiences. To this strictly Nationalist peace-campaign of the Majority the Government did not, as a rule, oppose obstacles. Only at a few places (Greiz, Elberfeld,

Barmen, Stettin, Bredow) meetings were prohibited, because the speakers refused to submit the text of their speeches to the authorities. The way the Government discriminated between Majority and Minority was seen in Berlin, where David's address was sanctioned, but a meeting at which Haase was to speak on "War and Peace" was forbidden.[1]

That this professed readiness for peace meant peace rigidly on the *status quo ante* basis, so far as any concessions by Germany were concerned, is indicated by an article on the Conference of neutral Socialists held in the summer of 1916 at The Hague, contributed to the *Internationale Korrespondenz* (August 9) by Wilhelm Jansson. Jansson complains that the decisions of the Conference were dictated by partiality for the Entente because they considered the Alsace-Lorraine question as one upon which there could be discussion. There *was* no Alsace-Lorraine question for Germany. If raised at all, it could be raised only as a domestic German question.

Scheidemann's speech at Dresden.

A speech which Scheidemann delivered at Dresden about this time puts together in a form which may be taken as typical the considerations governing the bulk of the Majority with regard to peace:—

For two years we have been passing through a time worse than any ever experienced before by a civilized nation. The distress is great—it would be foolish to deny it, since our enemies are fully aware of it and in fact are building their hopes on our internal collapse. Even if the German people were to break down, it would still stand in history as a great people. But Germany will not, Germany cannot, collapse. Germany must not collapse, since a collapse would mean that we should exchange the present temporary distress for lasting misery. Under the ruins of Germany the working-class would lie the deepest buried. Two things we must

[1] *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, August 29-30, 1916.

demand: Bread, and no shaking of our conviction that we are waging a war of defence. Germany has been fighting till now for her very existence, her independence, her possibility of life. We did not go out for conquests. That is proved sufficiently by the fact that Austria, under Germany's pressure, was willing to give up territory of her own free will to Italy. Germany, too, has put forward no plans of conquest. Bethmann Hollweg flatly declined to do so. England and France are continuing the war because they hope still to be able to carry out their schemes of conquest. Look at the mad peace conditions of the *Morning Post*. We wish for a peace which promises to last, without annexations. To the last second we tried to prevent war. We have tried ten times to get into touch with the French Socialists—they have always refused our advances, the last time only a week ago. Irresponsible talkers have put it about that the munition-workers ought to strike. It is incomprehensible to me that we can even think of the notion of hitting our soldiers from behind in order to make victory easier for the enemy. We wish for peace, but not for peace at any price. Germany would become the beggar-nation of the world, the German working-class would become a horde of beggars. What we have in common with the Government we have also in common with the whole nation—interest in the maintenance of our nation. The Socialists in Belgium, England, and France have closed up with their Governments—but nothing is said about that. Only if one of ourselves supports his Government the cry is at once raised: Voluntary Government-delegate! Extraordinarily great issues hang for Germany on a good peace. We wish for equal rights for all in elections. We ought to do nothing that could harm our troops—that is forbidden by our duty of gratitude. We are ready to conclude peace, but not a peace at any price, which would condemn our workers to starvation. We are what we have always been—fighters for Socialism, fighters for democracy, fighters for the peace of the world.

Haase's speech at Jena.

As against this speech of Scheidemann's we may set one of Haase's delivered at Jena at the end of August 1916, as giving the view which was being propagated by the Minority. Haase reaffirmed what was one of his

main premises, that it was impossible in this war for either side to win. Since diplomats could not find a way out of the impasse, the only hope was that the peace-will of the masses, of "the international proletariat," should end the war. If once a majority in Germany would rally to the view of the "Social Democrat Labour Fellowship," then in France and England too, Haase assured his hearers, the majority would become pacifist and the thing would be done.[1]

The Party Directorate against the Imperialist Socialists.

The question whether the Majority did or did not desire annexations was made clearer by an article which Conrad Haenisch published in *Vorwärts* (September 5, 1916) and the discussion to which it gave rise. It was certain that the extreme Right wing of the Party was prepared to back up the demand for annexations, and to this wing Haenisch had come to belong. His article declared frankly that he desired as extensive annexations as possible on the East, and on the West security that Belgium should not serve as a jumping-off ground for England, though the Belgian people's life as a State should be spared. He asserted that the views he stated were those of all the Majority. This produced an answer from Stampfer (*Vorwärts,* September 7), one of the more cautious Majority members, repudiating Haenisch's views, and strongly insisting on the principle of "No annexations." The Party Directorate after this itself published a statement (*Vorwärts,* September 9) that its views had been officially expressed in the peace-petition. This was equivalent to endorsing Stampfer's statement as against that of Haenisch.

[1] *Frankfurter Zeitung,* August 28, 1916.

In connection with the extreme Right of the Social Democrat Party we may notice a peculiarity they were already exhibiting. On the question whether the main enemy was England or Russia, while Conservative and reactionary Germany, generally speaking, had answered "Liberal England," and Liberal and Socialist Germany had answered "Autocratic Russia," groups of Social Democrats now took sides with the Conservatives and reactionaries. In *Die Glocke* of September 1, 1916, edited by Haenisch, Wilhelm Jansson published an article advocating an understanding with Russia. The *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* the organ of another group, made apologies for despotic Russia and attacks on England a regular part of its plan of campaign. The traditional Socialist horror of Russia, it said frankly, had been largely based on illusion; on this point German Social Democracy must make a right-about turn. Curiously enough, this attitude of professed friendliness to Russia did not seem incompatible with an insistence on the unbroken belt of German power from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf. (Most of the enthusiasts for Berlin-to-Bagdad—Paul Rohrbach, for instance—regarded Russia, rather than England, as the enemy.) Indeed, the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* supports the Continental Idea (*Europa* rather than *Mitteleuropa*) —the whole European Continent, including France, Italy, and the Scandinavian States, bound together by common interests and economic reciprocity against Great Britain's empire of the seas. (Since the entrance of the United States into the war, this idea of the solidarity of Europe has been accentuated; the antithesis is now Continental Europe against united Anglo-Saxondom.)

The Imperialist Socialists advocates of "Autocratic Russia."

XIII

THE SEPTEMBER CONFERENCE

Elections to the Conference.

THE idea of calling a *Reichskonferenz*, a Conference of delegates from the Social Democrat local organizations all over the Empire, propounded at the meeting of the Party Committee on July 20, as a *pis aller* instead of an authoritative *Parteitag*, had now taken practical shape. A Conference was summoned for the three days September 21-23, to meet in the Reichstag building at Berlin; and during September the energies of German Social Democrats were largely taken up by the contests between Majority and Minority in the election of delegates from the various local centres. A certain movement of reaction in favour of the Majority seems at this time to have passed over German Social Democracy. Conrad Haenisch, speaking at a meeting in his constituency of Oberbarnim (Berlin), although a member of the Minority was there to argue against him, obtained a vote of confidence, with only five dissentient votes. Scheidemann, whose constituency of Solingen had been far from satisfied with his policy, now addressed two meetings in the place, at which votes of confidence were carried by overwhelming majorities. In the elections to the Conference, the Majority, it was seen, would really be the majority. This movement in their favour was perhaps due to the Majority's swerve to the Left, towards the position of the Minority, in their recent peace-campaign and in the peace-petition. On the other hand, the

Minority complained that the system of voting was unfair to them. Local branches with fifty members and under (of which there were about 100 in the Empire) combined in a "district" to send one delegate; an electoral circle with possibly 3,000 members also elected one delegate; circles with between 3,000 and 10,000 members, two delegates; circles with over 10,000 members, three delegates. This, it was said, gave undue weight to small branches as against the larger local bodies. All the Social Democrat Members of the Reichstag, all members of the Party Directorate, the Commission of Control, and the Party Committee were delegates *ex officio*. There had been a desire in the Party Directorate, favoured by Ebert, the Chairman of the Reichstag Group, to regard only the members of the *old* Reichstag Group as *ex officio* members of the Conference, not members of the "Social Democrat Labour Association." The Party Committee, however, had been for including the members of both Groups, and this view had prevailed.

Should the Minority join in the Conference?

That the Extremists had not relaxed their activities may be seen by the complaints still occurring at this time that the Empire had been "flooded" with anonymous pamphlets slanderously attacking the various leaders of the Party.[1] At one moment there was some talk of the Minority boycotting the Conference altogether. The more moderate, however, of the Minority were on the whole glad of it, as giving them an opportunity to state their views without police interference. They did not, indeed, entertain any hope that the party could be united by it in a common programme, but they thought it might be possible that a greater latitude for disagreement would be

[1] *Vorwärts*, September 19, 1916.

permitted during the war within the Party, in virtue of which the Minority might have freedom of utterance without a disruption of the Party. Kautsky was more sceptical. What was the good of the Conference, he asked, if its resolutions were not to be authoritative? If it was only a case of the opposition being granted liberty for their propaganda within the Party organization, the Directorate might concede them that, were they so disposed, straight away, without any Conference at all. If they were not disposed to do so, a Conference without authority could not compel them.[1]

Results of the elections.

When the results of the elections were declared, it was found that Berlin, of course, had gone solid for the Minority. So had Bremen, Bremerhaven, Königsberg, Essen, Düsseldorf, Leipsig, the first three Saxony groups, the Lower Rhine, and North Bavaria. Frankfurt sent seven Minority delegates against two Majority. Hamburg, Lübeck, Hanover and Westphalia, Schleswig, the Rhine province, Hessen-Nassau, Baden, Würtemberg, and most of Bavaria were Majority.

The total number of delegates sent to the Conference was 302. Adding to these the 143 *ex-officio* members (the Party Directorate, etc.), we get a total of 445 persons taking part in the Conference.

The first day: Shall the Conference pass resolutions on questions of policy?

On September 21 the Conference assembled in the Reichstag building. The first controversial question which came up was whether it should pass any resolutions beyond such as had to do merely with its own business arrangements. The Minority wished the Conference to be limited to debate, to the exposition of the different views, to the clearing of issues. They

[1] *Vorwärts*, September 20, 1916.

did not want questions of policy put to the vote. They knew that on a vote they would be left in a minority; and since they did not recognize that the strength of the different elements in the Conference corresponded with their real relative strength in the country, they did not wish to be condemned by what would look like a decision of the Party, but would not be such in reality. Ledebour at the beginning of the proceedings put this forward on behalf of some 100 Minority members. He was supported by Frassek, spokesman for the diminutive "International Socialist" group. The decision of this question was deferred till after the debate had taken place. The rest of the first day was occupied by a long speech from Scheidemann and a speech from Ebert.

Scheidemann's speech.

Scheidemann went over the old ground of the Majority. Germany was fighting a war of self-defence. At first it had been the overwhelming Russian peril. Yet "the situation in August 1914 was, in point of danger, a mere bagatelle in comparison with the situation to-day." The Minority enormously under-estimated the peril, and over-estimated the effect which a refusal of war-credits on the part of German Social Democracy would have in disposing other nations to peace. He defended the Majority against the charge that it had become subservient to the Government. Its "confidential relations" with the Government meant no more than that the Government now put the Social Democrat Party on a level with the other Parties in communicating official intelligence. The Majority was quite ready to criticize the Government adversely, where occasion called for it. It had done more for peace than could be revealed till the war was over. "We fight against all annexations—though that *does*

not mean that not a single boundary-stone would be shifted, but that in all changes of frontier the wishes of all concerned must be consulted." There must be no change which contained the germs of fresh wars.

Ebert's speech was a statement of the way in which the war had affected the statistics of the Party. The loss of members of the organization since March 1914 had reached the figure of 63 per cent. The Party Press had lost 46 per cent. of its subscribers. Things had become still blacker during the last few months with the increased drain of men into the army. But this did not account for all the loss. There had been a great falling off in women-members, although the employment of women had been so extended during the war. The management of the Party had been specially reproached for not doing more in the food question. And yet it had never ceased to fight the profiteers. The Directorate had also done its best to get into touch with foreign Socialists, and had declared over and over again that it was for a peace without conquests. The end of Ebert's speech was a denunciation of those who tried to split the Party and organize strikes in munition works. This of course provoked retorts from the Extremists present, and the first day of the Conference had a somewhat stormy close.

Ebert's gloomy report.

On September 22 the spokesmen for the Minority addressed the assembly, first Haase for the "Labour Fellowship" [1] and then Kate Duncker for the Extremists. Then a resolution, expressing the views of the Majority, was proposed by Dr. David. Upon this the debate was opened, in which speakers on both sides took part and which was resumed on the third day.

The second day

[1] See footnotes on pages 8, 13, 15, 20.

After the conclusion of the debate, the first question to be decided was whether the Conference was to put David's resolution to the vote at all. The Minority were against doing so. When the Conference voted on this preliminary question, Haase's motion that the Conference was not competent to pass resolutions, other than merely business ones, was rejected by 276 votes to 169. This vote cannot be taken straightaway as an index of the relative strength of the Majority and Minority in German Socialism in September 1916. According to the size of the constituencies which the delegates severally represented, it was calculated in a Social Democrat paper that the votes on the side of the Majority represented 524,797 electors, and the votes given for Haase's motion 516,079 electors. This method of ascertaining the strength of the two elements in the Party was a rough-and-ready one, since it took no account of the different minorities in the several constituencies which had been against the delegate eventually elected; yet since the inexactitude in this respect on one side may be taken to balance that on the other, it may be believed that the Minority was actually stronger at this time than was shown in the voting on Haase's motion. Very nearly half the Social Democrats in the country (leaving out of account, of course, those at the front) may have taken their stand with the Minority in the autumn of 1916.

The third day: the Minority vote and the electors which it represented.

It must be pointed out that the 169 votes represented the Minority in the largest extension of that word—not only the adherents of Haase (the "Labour Fellowship") and the two Extremist sections, but also the section represented by the Twenty in the Reichstag who adhered to the old Group and would not vote

against war-credits, but who also refused to vote *for* them and advocated a latitude of opinion in the Party which would allow Haase and his adherents freedom of action without any severance of fellowship. At the Conference this section—called sometimes "the Antrick-Hoch section" after two of its leaders—threw in its lot with the Haase section against the rest of the Majority.

The Minority abstain from voting.

The Conference having been decided, in spite of the opposition, to put questions of policy to the vote, both the adherents of Haase, the Antrick-Hoch group, and the two Extremist groups announced that they would abstain from voting. Hence, when David's resolution was put to the vote, only five delegates voted against it. The bulk of the Majority delegates, 251, voted for it. Another motion was then put, approving of the action of the Majority in voting war-credits and condemning the action of the Minority. The 96 Members of the Reichstag present did not vote on this question, which concerned their own conduct; this brought down the number of votes given for it to 218; three votes were given against it.

A number of further resolutions were passed referring to the Censorship, the food-control, etc., and the Conference ended with an appeal for unity from Ebert.

The significance of the Conference.

Both Majority and Minority professed to be highly gratified with the result. The Majority emphasized the fact that they had been proved to be indeed the majority, the Minority the fact that they had been proved to be so large a minority. On the whole, the Conference seems to have improved the position of the Minority rather than that of the Majority. It seems to

have been a surprise in many quarters to discover that the Minority had come to form so considerable a part of the Social Democrat body. It had been shown that they were not a mere clique of cranks, but a force to be reckoned with. Two features generally were noticed in the Conference. One was that, in spite of some sharp disagreements, it had gone off much more quietly than some people had anticipated. The other was that the Imperialist group—the group of Lensch and Quessel and Heine—had lain very low. They seem to have shrunk from advancing their especial gospel before an assembly representing German Social Democracy as a whole. This was much commented on in the Minority Press and was in truth significant.

The Peace Meeting at Frankfurt.

A week after the conclusion of the Conference a big Peace Meeting, attended by 30,000 people, was held in the East Park at Frankfurt (October 1). The meeting passed a resolution agreeing with the standpoint of the moderate Majority—demanding, that is, a peace without annexations, on the basis of the *status quo*. The Government were adjured to strive for this, without being influenced by the voices of furious Nationalists and annexationists.

XIV

TOWARDS A COMPLETE SPLIT

THE Conference had been a climax towards which the activities of German Social Democrats had been directed during the later summer of 1916. The history of German Social Democracy during the months following the Conference is mainly the record of events leading to a complete separation of Majority and Minority into two distinct organizations throughout the country, and the various reactions produced in the Party by the successive episodes on the large political stage.

The months after the Conference.

The figure of Philipp Scheidemann had come during the last year into a new and singular prominence. The section for which Scheidemann stood was probably the largest homogeneous section in the Party. It occupied a central position—the position which was practically identical with that described as the Left Centre in the Party as it was before the war. As against the Imperialist Socialists to its right, it repudiated the idea of annexations (though before the Russian Revolution, Scheidemann seemed not averse from the annexation of some old Russian territory) and stood fast for a peace on the *status quo* basis; as against Haase and his "Labour Fellowship" it maintained that till the enemies of Germany were prepared to conclude a peace on this basis, it was

Philipp Scheidemann the prominent figure.

the duty of German Socialists to vote war-credits to enable the Government to carry on the war.

The amount of the public attention directed upon Scheidemann had not been due only to the fact that he was the spokesman for the largest section of German Social Democracy, but to the mystery surrounding his relations with the Government. Scheidemann, as has been narrated, asserted in June 1916 that he knew from a private interview he had had with the Chancellor that the Chancellor was against the annexations clamoured for by the Pan-Germans. He gave it to be understood that in denouncing annexations altogether, he, Scheidemann, was the true exponent of the mind of the German Government. Those of other Parties who wished *both* to be subservient to the Government *and* to stick to annexations vehemently denied that Scheidemann had any right to claim to speak for the Government; they said that the utterances of Bethmann Hollweg, if interpreted in their natural sense, implied the purpose to annex, not what Scheidemann pretended that they meant. In this the Social Democrat Minority leaders agreed—not because they wished to be subservient to the Government, but because, from their point of view, to show that the Government was at heart annexationist was to lay bare its evil will. Scheidemann, said Eduard Bernstein, forced an unnatural sense upon Bethmann's utterances, in order to represent the Government as innocent, and he roundly taxed Scheidemann and his group with dishonesty. On the other hand, the Pan-German enemies of the Chancellor, who wanted to discredit the Government for *not* being annexationist, or not being annexationist enough, were always suggesting that there might after all be a secret understanding between Bethmann and Scheidemann and

that the Government might actually be steering for a "Scheidemann peace." In this way the figure of Scheidemann came to occupy a central place in the political controversies of the hour in Germany.

Scheidemann's speech in the Reichstag on October 11 stamped the attitude of the moderate Majority in certain phrases which passed into currency:—

> The French do not know, and this time they will probably not discover, because the Censorship will not let it through, that they could have the freeing of their own country, and of Belgium also, from German troops without having to shed another drop of blood and without losing an inch of ground.
>
> We say that what is French shall remain French; what is Belgian shall remain Belgian; what is German, German.

The Majority gains control of *Vorwärts*.

Before this speech of Scheidemann's an event had taken place which caused profound feeling in the Party. The anomalous position of *Vorwärts* was rudely terminated by its being first suppressed by the Government for ten days and then started again as a Majority not a Minority organ. The ostensible reason for which the Government suppressed the paper was that it had published an article "From the Witches' Cauldron of the Chancellor *Fronde*" on October 8, attacking the industrial magnates whom it believed to be behind the attack on the Chancellor. This could be represented as a breach of the Civil Truce; yet it was odd that such an article, which attacked the *enemies* of the Government, should have been singled out for punishment. It is probable that the article "From the Witches' Cauldron" was not the real reason why the Government took action, but only a pretext. In the same number of *Vorwärts* the leading article implied that at the beginning of the war the Kaiser had been overborne by an irresponsible

clique. It is likely that this was the real offence, whilst the Government could not well give this as its reason, without making the allegation seem to have some truth in it.

The military Higher Command made it a condition of the paper's reappearance that there should be a thorough change of staff. There must be some person with plenary powers in control of the paper who could give the Government trustworthy guarantees that the Party would not allow the paper any longer to prejudice the national cause. This was in itself a startling extension of the censorial functions of the military. What made it more sinister was that it was currently reported that the stipulation made by the Higher Command had actually been suggested by the manager of *Vorwärts,* Richard Fischer, who, as has been said, was a Majority man. It seemed a case of the Directorate of the Social Democrat Party of Germany invoking the arm of the military to crush the fraction opposed to it in the Party—a mode of association between Social Democracy and the Government which was enough to make the old leaders of the Party turn in their graves.

When therefore *Vorwärts* re-appeared on October 18, 1916, it was no longer the *Vorwärts* of before. Hermann Müller, who some time before had resigned his invidious position as Party "Censor," was back again as the representative of the Party Directorate with full powers of control. The place of *Vorwärts* as the principal voice of the Minority in the Press was henceforth taken by the *Leipziger Volkszeitung.* An attempt was made to circulate this latter paper even in Berlin. Twenty thousand copies of the number for October 19 were distributed in Berlin amongst the *Vorwärts* subscribers, but the circulation

of the Leipzig paper in Berlin was then forbidden by the authorities.

The Oschatz-Grimma election.

A Reichstag by-election in the autumn, which made some stir, was that in the Oschatz-Grimma-Warzen division of Saxony. The seat had been held by a Conservative, and according to the informal understanding implied in the Civil Peace any seat in the Reichstag becoming vacant during the war was to be allowed to go without a contest to a representative of the same Party which had held it before the war. When, however, so extreme a man as Dr. Wildgrube, a manufacturer and Pan-German and supporter of the *Fronde* against the Chancellor, was nominated as Conservative candidate for this seat, the Social Democrats determined on their side to put up a candidate. And against an extreme man on the Conservative side they put up a well-known Minority man on theirs, Lipinski. His candidature was supported against Dr. Wildgrube even by the Majority. On the eve of the election the hopes of the Social Democrats were high. Dr. Wildgrube, however, was elected by a small majority, thanks to the rural vote, which was predominantly Conservative.

Agitation against the Majority.

The *Vorwärts* affair had very much damaged the credit of the Majority in the Party. Further indications came up in the Reichstag debate in the latter part of October on preventive arrests, that the Government had used its power to hamper the Minority campaign against the Majority. The reproach that the Majority had become a Government Party acquired a new sting. In Berlin itself there was fresh agitation. The proposal that contributions to the Party chest should be withheld again came up and was urged by the Extremists. The more moderate members of the

Minority, such as Bernstein, were against it, and even the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* declared that the step would be suicidal. While therefore strongly condemning the action of the Directorate, the Berlin Comrades stopped short of bringing about a complete schism by refusing their contributions.

Vorwärts affair; dismissal of the old editors.

During November, the Majority completed its control of *Vorwärts* by getting rid of those members of the old editorial staff who had remained in the office. On November 13, Däumig, another editor, whose function at the beginning of the war had been to see that the rules of the Censorship were observed, was also dismissed. Two other editors, who wrote to the Directorate saying that they shared Däumig's views, were dismissed. On November 17, Richard Fischer obtained an interim injunction, forbidding the dismissed editors to enter the editorial room under pain of a fine.

The Civilian Auxiliary Service Bill.

The Auxiliary Service Bill (*Hilfsdienstgesetz*), introduced by the Government at the end of November, which compelled all male subjects of the Empire between the ages of seventeen and sixty, not engaged in military service, to do work of some kind required by the State, was a new ground of division between the two wings of the Social Democrat Party. The Bill was supported, though with qualifications, by the Majority, whilst it was bitterly denounced by the Minority as a new violation of the liberties of the people. When the Bill was put to the vote in the Reichstag (December 2), 41 Social Democrat members either absented themselves or sent in a formal note of their abstention. These included the "Labour Fellowship" and the Antrick-Hoch section. The Auxiliary Service Bill created a new department under the military authorities. It

was a feature of this moment that amongst the Social Democrat Majority there was a disposition to contrast the military authorities favourably with the civil. The civil authorities, it was allowed, were dominated by capitalist and Junker interests, they were bureaucratic and reactionary; but the military authorities, simply concerned to organize and direct the national strength in a war of pure self-defence, were worthy of the confidence of Labour. Hence the German Trade Unions, led by Legien, gave warm support to the new War Department.

Bremen and Brunswick secede.

On December 2 a meeting of Minority Social Democrats of Berlin, where the Minority had a local majority, decided by 210 votes to 20 to stop payments to the Party chest. This meant that the Bremen Majority Comrades now formed a wholly distinct organization. It was the quite definite secession of a responsible Socialist body from the Party. A few days later the Brunswick Social Democrats followed suit.

The six in the Prussian Landtag.

About the same time the Minority ceased to have a majority in the Prussian Landtag. Of their six members, Liebknecht, Ströbel, Hofer, Adolf Hoffmann, Paul Hoffmann, and Paul Hirsch, Liebknecht was in prison and Hirsch had gone back by a second transition to the Majority.

Is the Majority in collusion with the Government?

Further incidents at the beginning of December tended to confirm the suspicions of a secret alliance between the Majority and the Government. When the Chancellor made the "peace offer" of the German Government in his speech in the Reichstag on December 12, it was noted with alarm in the Jingo Press that the Social Democrat *Chemnitzer Volksstimme* had a

forecast of it almost too accurate to be due to happy guesswork. Early in December Scheidemann and Ebert paid a visit to The Hague to meet the committee of the International Socialist Bureau. In their conversations with this body they admitted that the Belgian deportations were regarded with disapproval by the German Social Democrats. On the other hand, they persuaded the Committee to combine with its protest against the Belgian deportations protests against things done by the Entente Powers—deportations of East Prussians by the Russians, treatment of German prisoners, etc. The *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* and the *Times* sugggested that the two Socialist leaders had gone to The Hague on an understanding with the German Government. Scheidemann vehemently denied this in a speech at Cologne on December 17. Yet the German Government had certainly given them passports; and the Jingo Press was uneasy. Meanwhile, the co-operation of the military authorities and the Trade Unions in the matter of the Auxiliary Service Law was growing closer and more cordial.

The German "peace offer" and the Social Democrats, December 1916.

On December 12 the German Government made its first famous "peace offer" by the mouth of the Chancellor. It was applauded in the Socialist Majority Press. In the Minority Press satisfaction was expressed at the fact that the Central Powers had made the first step towards peace, but the form of the offer was regarded as unfortunate, as not calculated to bring about peace. The Minority especially criticized the omission in the Note to give any specification of the German terms. There seems evidence that in Majority circles there was genuine surprise and disappointment when the Entente Powers

refused to enter into negotiations upon the basis of the German Note. They had been induced by the official picture of the situation to believe that the position and prospects of the Entente Powers were very bad and imagined that they would welcome with eagerness an offer from the winning side. Their refusal seemed mere blind and malignant perversity.

The Conservatives, the Socialists, and internal reform.

The fear inspired in Conservative circles at the notion of co-operation between Bethmann and Scheidemann had not reference to peace-terms only, was not only because the Conservatives clung to the grandiose Pan-German scheme for the expansion of German power in the world which would be shattered by a "Scheidemann peace," but it had also reference to home politics. If the Government came to lean upon the Socialists, it would have to make concessions to the Socialists in the matter of Constitutional reform. During the early months of 1917 there was more talk than ever in the air about the *Neuorientierung,* the new willingness of the German Government to make changes in the direction of democracy. Ideas of reform centered about two main questions. One was the reform of the system by which members are elected to the Prussian Landtag, a system which produces a House representative of Junker and capitalist interests rather than of the people; the other was the making effective the Reichstag's control of affairs. The Reichstag is elected by universal manhood suffrage; but as long as the Chancellor is responsible to the Emperor, not to the House, as long as the House can do nothing to remove the Government from office, so long it does not represent any real democratic control, on whatever principle of election it may be composed. The

Majority Social Democrats who gave the Government their support continued to intimate that they expected from the Government real changes in the new direction. From time to time they gave evidence of impatience that the Government continued only to deal out fair words, where they wanted to see deeds.

A Minority Conference, January, 1917.

On January 7, 1917, the Minority held a Conference of its own in Berlin. Seventy-two local branches were represented: there were 138 delegates beside 19 Members of the Reichstag. Both the great bulk of the Minority who followed Haase and the two Extremist sections took part. The Extremists, however, took care to emphasize that they would not be bound by any resolutions the Conference might pass, and that they were united with the Haase section "only for one day."

A resolution was proposed by Lipinski which enumerated the oppresive acts of the official leaders of the Party, especially their seizure of the Party Press in Berlin, Bremen, Duisberg, and Stuttgart, conduct which "contravenes the statutes of the Party and endangers the Party itself."

> Those local and district organizations in which the *larger number* of members hold the views of the Opposition must always come into close touch with each other. Where the Comrades on the side of the Opposition are *in the minority,* they must work indefatigably within the frame of the Party statutes for the dissemination of their views and draw together in the way which may best enable them to fulfil the tasks incumbent upon the opposition in the interests of the Party and to keep themselves informed.

With regard, however, to the proposal to withhold contributions from the Party chest, the resolution expressed an adverse judgment. To do this would not really alter the financial resources of the Party

Directorate and would mean that the Minority would lose all its influence. The *Parteitag* that comes together after thorough preparation, when constitutional guarantees have been restored, must find the Opposition at its post, if the question is to be decided whether the Party shall forsake the old paths."

This resolution was passed by the 111 votes of the Haase group; against it the "Spartacus" section could muster 34 votes and the "International Socialist" section no more than seven.

XV

"THE INDEPENDENT SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY OF GERMANY"

The Majority completes the cleavage.

THE answer of the Majority leaders to the challenge of the Minority was not long delayed. On January 18, 1917, the Party Committee met to consider the matter. A resolution was carried by 29 votes to 10 that the action of the Minority in holding the Conference constituted *ipso facto* a schism from the Party. On January 20 the Party Directorate issued a circular laying down that all those who declared themselves in agreement with the resolutions passed by the Opposition could "no longer be or continue members of the Party." This was followed up by a later order prescribing that in those local organizations where the larger number of members held the views of the Majority, all members who did not expressly dissociate themselves from the resolutions of the Minority Conference were to be ejected from the Party; and where the larger number of members held by the Minority the adherents of the Party Directorate were to separate themselves and form distinct organizations, which the Directorate would recognize as the sole legitimate branches of the Party.

It was this action on the part of the Majority leaders which made the split in German Social Democracy

inevitable. According to the letter of the Party Statutes only a *Parteitag* had the authority to expel a member. The Minority thus represented the action of the Directorate as another illegality. The Majority might say that their expulsion of members was only a provisional one, a suspension of their rights, till the future *Parteitag* rescinded or ratified the sentence. The Minority replied that the appeal to the future *Parteitag* was now illusory. In the state of things created by the Directorate's order of expulsion, it would be easy for the Directorate to secure an overwhelming majority at the *Parteitag;* they could simply refuse to admit the delegates chosen by organizations they did not recognize. A *Parteitag* would thus no longer avail to re-unite the severed limbs of the Socialist body.

The Prussian Landtag Group breaks into two.

In the middle of January the Social Democrat Group in the Prussian House of Representatives broke into two. After a scene in the House between Hirsch and Adolf Hoffmann, the four Minority members separated from the five Majority, and formed themselves into a new group, entitled "Social Democrat Group, Old Line (*alte Richtung*)."

Mehring defeated as a candidate for the Reichstag, and successful as a candidate for the Prussian Landtag.

A Reichstag by-election was to take place in March in the constituency of Potsdam-Spandau-Osthavelland, to fill the seat left vacant by Liebknecht's imprisonment. In January the Haase Minority agreed with the Extremists to put up Franz Mehring as a candidate. The nomination of so extreme a man was taken by the non-Socialist Parties to dispense them from the obligations of the Civil Peace. They intimated, however, that if the Social Democrat Majority would put up a

candidate from their ranks to oppose Mehring, they would support him and not put up a non-Socialist candidate for the seat. This the leaders of the Majority determined to do. The candidate chosen was Emil Stahl, of the Transport Workers' Union, a plain working-man who had served at the front in 1915. It became, therefore, a combat between two Socialists. The election took place on March 14, and the Majority candidate was victorious. The result was indeed a surprise, since even the Majority had expected the contest to be a close one. And yet Mehring got only 5,010 votes to Stahl's 16,881! What made the result more strange was that a few days earlier Mehring won a signal victory in the elections which took place to supply Liebknecht's vacant place in the Prussian Landtag.

The preliminary elections for this latter constituency, the 11th Berlin Landtag constituency, had taken place on February 21. It was a case of filling up 268 vacancies in the Electoral College which had occurred since Liebknecht had been elected to the seat in 1913. Here too the contest had been between Mehring and a Majority Socialist, Louis Brunner, President of the German Railway Workers' Union. All the non-Socialist Parties—Conservatives, National-Liberals, Centre, and Progressives—combined to support Brunner. Yet of the 268 new members of the Electoral College returned, 218 were pledged to support Mehring; 28 were Progressives, and only 6 Majority Socialists. In the final voting (March 20), Mehring got 336 votes against the 42 given for Brunner and the 44 given for the Progressive candidate.

On February 9 the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* printed a Manifesto of the "Labour Fellowship" signed by Haase, Ledebour, and Vogtherr. It began with the

usual enumeration of the crimes of the Majority and invited all local branches which had declared for the Minority and, where the local organization was Majority, the Comrades who had been deprived of their rights to take part in another Minority Conference. It was significant that the wording of the Manifesto was such as not to apply to branches in which the Majority was in the ascendency, but Minority members had been allowed to retain their rights, or to branches which were still neutral. It seemed to show a desire on the part of the "Labour Fellowship" to conserve what vestiges of Party unity still remained.

The "Labour Fellowship" summons another Minority Conference.

On March 9 *Vorwärts* printed a letter from Scheidemann defining his attitude on the question of "indemnities," which was becoming a topic of controversy. In this letter Scheidemann denied that he had ever uttered the phrase which was continually thrown up against him, as proving that he was against Germany's receiving compensation for its losses: "Every land must bear its own burden." Yet it would be equally untrue to say that he stood for a war indemnity. His position was this: Supposing there were a conference between the belligerents, and the representatives of Germany secured a war-indemnity, he certainly would not say that Germany must continue the war till a situation was brought about in which it would lose its chance of getting an indemnity. On the other hand, he was opposed to any demands being maintained which would make reconciliation difficult and prolong the war. What he stood for was Germany's *territorial inviolability* (i.e. a territorial *status quo*), its *political independence* and *freedom of economic development.*

Scheidemann explains his position.

In March the quarrel between Majority and Minority as to *Vorwärts* came into the Civil Courts. Some members of the dismissed editorial staff brought an action for illegal dismissal against the *Vorwärts* Publishing Company, Richard Fischer and the Party Directorate. The Court gave a verdict for the defendants, with costs.

The *Vorwärts* case in Court.

In March 1917 the event occurred which affected the position of Socialism all over the world, altered the whole military balance, and thereby reacted upon the interior situation in Germany as in all other belligerent countries—the Russian revolution. In Germany its first effect was to excite and stimulate in the Social Democrat Party the old desires for democratic reform; it also brought home to the German Government the need for concessions. The approach of the convulsion in Russia was early felt by the German Government. On March 14 the Chancellor made a speech in the Prussian Landtag, in which he seemed to promise, on behalf of the Government, internal democratic reform more definitely than he had ever done before. A few days after this speech the Russian explosion came. It was followed in Germany by the Kaiser's Easter Message, promising at some date in the future, not specified, direct and secret suffrage in Prussia. Those in Germany who were demanding internal reform gained a new feeling of strength. Scheidemann took a more masterful tone. On March 19 he was calling for immediate action on the part of the Government. Russia had been promised reform after the war, but she grew tired of waiting, with the result that we see—a veiled threat!

Social Democrats and the Government's promises of reform.

At the same time the Majority showed a new

readiness to amalgamate in a single *bloc* with the non-Socialist Parties—even the National-Liberal—which were in favor of internal reform, so as to bring upon the Chancellor a more effective pressure than could be exercised from the reactionary side.

The Minority Press treated the Government's promises with ridicule. The Government's intentions were not honest. It wanted to delay reform and believed that the people could be put off indefinitely with fair words.

The Gotha Conference of April 1917: the Minority to become a separate organization, "The Independent Social Democrat Party of Germany."

The new Minority Conference, which the Manifesto published in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* of February 9 had adumbrated, took place at Gotha during the three days April 6-8. It was attended by 143 delegates from various parts of the Empire. In addition fifteen members of the Reichstag were present, Karl Kautsky, and Däumig, ex-editor of *Vorwärts*. The proceedings were presided over by Wilhelm Bock, the veteran Socialist, who had presided at a Conference in Gotha forty-two years before when a united German Social Democrat Party was formed by a union of the following of Wilhelm Liebknecht with the following of Lasselle. The "Spartacus" section took part, as well as the "Labour Fellowship," in the present Conference, and an accommodation between the two sections making common action possible was arranged. The other Extremist section, the "International Socialists," stood aloof. The Gotha Conference agreed to the draft submitted to it of a new separate organization of the Minority, which was now to be a wholly distinct body from the Majority, and to bear the distinguishing name of "The Independent Social Democrat Party of Germany."

The "International Socialist" section at this time came somewhat under a cloud. Julian Borchardt, the editor of their organ, *Lichtstrahlen*, was discovered to have contributed a Preface to a Jingo book by a certain Karl Erdmann, a book which violently attacked England and defended ruthless submarine warfare. It was further discovered that the reason why Borchardt had contributed this Preface to a book in flagrant contradiction with his professed principles, was that he had been handsomely paid to do so by the publisher. On April 1 the Socialist organization of Teltow-Beeskow, in which Borchardt held an official position, considered the matter. Borchardt admitted the truth of the charge against him; the only defence he could find was that his contributing a Preface to a book was no sign of his agreeing with its contents. This was obviously lame, and a vote of censure was passed upon Borchardt; he was also deprived of the offices which he held in the local Socialist Minority organization. About the same time another prominent member of an Extremist section, Rosa Luxemburg, was condemned to ten days' imprisonment, because, when under preventive arrest, she had had an altercation with the warden and thrown a blotting-pad at him. Frau Luxemburg seems to have denied throwing the blotting-pad, but pleaded guilty to having thrown a piece of chocolate. The Extremists did not gain in dignity either by the Borchardt or by the Luxemburg incident.

The "International Socialists" suffer in reputation.

The spokesman of the "Spartacus" section at the Gotha Conference had spoken disparagingly of parliamentary activity, and urged that Socialists ought to seek to stir up the masses, "turn to account the excitement which

Strikes, April 1917.

had been reigning since the Russian Revolution among the working-class." A few days later it seemed as if such plans had been carried into execution. April was marked by the outbreak of strikes in the munition factories of Berlin and Leipzig, and apparently some other localities. Berlin and Leipzig were the two big cities in which the minority was strongest. The Majority and the Trade Unions did what they could to check the strike movement before it came to a head, and condemned the strikes when they had broken out. At the same time they urged the Government to take away the motives for striking by more effective measures in the food question, and by the immediate concession of internal reforms. It was acknowledged that the unrest expressed in the strikes was not only economic but political.

The Party Committee considers the Split. Idea of annexations in the East abandoned.

On April 18 the Party Committee met to consider what was to be done in view of the formation of a separate opposition Socialist organization. Ebert indicated the importance of wresting the women's paper, *Die Gleichheit*, and Kautsky's paper, *Die Neue Zeit*, from the Opposition. Certain members of the Committee, especially the delegate from Bavaria, still pleaded for conciliation and unity. The Committee ultimately passed a resolution, containing the following points: The war was not to be ended in a way which would compromise Germany's independence; internal democratic reform, but no interference from foreigners; greetings to the New Russia, and acceptance of the basis of "no annexations and no indemnities" and "free national development for all peoples"; opposition to German Jingo plans of conquest; no nation to be humiliated; a compulsory International Court of Arbitration.

One of the noteworthy features of this resolution was that it implied the abandonment by Scheidemann and those who followed him of the idea that annexations in the East might be sanctioned. The Party was now strictly committed to the *status quo* on both frontiers.

The local branches take sides.

The definite division of the old Socialist Party into two Parties after the Conference of Gotha forced upon all the local branches the necessity of a clear decision for one or the other. Even in Bavaria, where there had been a forlorn effort to keep on a united basis, local branches now began seceding to the new Independent Party. At Solingen, Scheidemann's own constituency, the local branch decided for the Independent Party, and passed a resolution by 51 votes to 13 denying Scheidemann's right to represent the constituency. All over Germany conflicts in the local branches went on. In Hamburg, which had been a Majority stronghold, Haase now addressed a meeting of 800 persons, and a local branch of the Independents was established, which soon counted more than 1,000 members.

May-day 1917.

The Independent Party seems to have designed fresh popular demonstrations for May-day. According to a document published in the *Berner Tagwacht,* an appeal was circulated in factories and workshops calling on them to stop work on that day. The Directorate of the old Party and the General Committee of the Trade Unions, on the other hand, issued a joint Manifesto, exhorting the workers not to stop work. The Government also seems to have taken precautionary measures. In any case, May-day 1917 passed off quietly in Germany. Only a few workers here and there came out. There were some local meetings—for instance, a large one at Leipzig, addressed by Geyer.

It would seem that during May the Independent Party was gaining upon the old Party in Germany. In the 15th Constituency in the Chemnitz district, whose local organ, the Chemnitz *Volksstimme,* was one of the staunchest Majority papers, the local branch decided by an overwhelming majority to join the Independents. At Chemnitz itself a local branch of the Independent Party was established.

The Independents gain: the old Party seizes various papers.

The gains of the Independents were all the more significant in that the old Party had almost the entire Party Press in its hands. The case of the *Vorwärts* was not the only one in which the official authorities of the old Party had wrested an organ from the Opposition by *force majeure.* This had also been done in the case of the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung.* (One of its editors, Holzmeier, committed suicide in the latter days of March after his dismissal, but the Majority Press maintained that the argument *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* was in this case invalid.) At Brunswick the Majority possessed itself forcibly of the *Volksfreund* (March 30), where the old editorial staff was not expelled till after a free fight in the office of the paper. In May the Party Directorate obtained possession of *Die Gleichheit,* the central organ of the International Socialist Women's movement. Clara Zetkin, under whose editorship *Die Gleichheit* had taken a strong line for the Minority, was expelled from her office.

We seem to observe that the extreme Right section of Imperialist Socialists had gained a relatively more important place in the old Party, now that all the Left wing had been eliminated, than it had had in days of unity. When Lensch, in the summer of 1916, had spoken at a

The two parties after the split.

meeting in favour of a forward colonial policy, the Party Directorate had felt bound to announce publicly that it accepted no responsibility for Lensch's utterances. But in June 1917 Noske, a Social Democrat of the Imperialist section, said in the Reichstag that it "goes without saying" that Germany must have a Colonial Empire, and the authorities of the Party made no sign of dissent. The Independent Party also could take a more uncompromising line than the Haase section could do, when there was still some concern for Party unity. Even now that concern had not altogether disappeared from German Social Democracy. In the old Party there were many, represented by the Antrick-Hoch section, who, while still adhering to the old Party for the sake of discipline, sympathized to a large extent with the Independents and were opposed to the voting of war-credits. Scheidemann himself held a position intermediate between that of the Antrick-Hoch section and the Imperialist section. His speech in the Reichstag on May 15, when the question of war-aims was before the House, created an excitement by his uttering upon the electric air the word "revolution." Scheidemann threatened revolution, only on the hypothesis of France and Britain declaring their willingness to return to the map of July 1914, and Germany refusing to do so—a hypothesis remote enough from probabilities. Even so, the word caused a storm in the house, and there seemed to ring in it a warning that even the Majority might falter in its allegiance to the Government, might be carried off its feet by those tides of popular feeling set in motion by the Russian revolution.

The movement in the country, which carried the working-class ever more and more into the Inde-

pendent camp continued. At the end of May 1917 the old Party lost Erfurt, whose member in the Reichstag, Heinrich Schulz, was the man chosen to edit *Die Gleichheit,* after the expulsion of Clara Zetkin. A meeting of the Erfurt Comrades, including thirty-four delegates, representing ten local sections in the constituency, met together to hear Schultz put the case for the old Party, and a local editor the case for the Independents, and then decided, with only four dissentient voices, to join the Independent Socialist Party.

The old Party fought hard. They tried to arrest the movement by holding meetings all over the country and starting new branches. But during June the Independents continued to make headway. One local branch after another went over to them, or else new local organizations were formed under their auspices side by side with the branch adhering to the old Party. The local branch at Eisenbach in Thuringia decided to join them, against the advice of its leader. At the delegates' meeting which discussed the question, sixteen votes were given against nine. Other places mentioned, at which the local branches passed over before the end of June, are Schmalkalden, Halle-Saalkreis, Torgau, Delitzsch-Bitterfeld, Wetzlar-Altkirchen, Heidingsfeld (the second largest local branch in the Würzburg constituency), Borna, Wittenberg-Schweinitz and Randow-Greifenhagen (Pomerania). At Magdeburg the Independent local branch, started as a rival to the old Party branch with a membership of 150, had swelled by the end of June to a membership of 500.

A notable sign of the Independents' progress was given in the last days of June at the General Congress of the German Metal-workers' Union in Cologne. This Union is the largest Trade Union in Germany and in

the world. It has over a quarter of a million paying members, and the Congress was attended by 118 delegates, as well as by various Trade Union officials and Legien, the President of the Federation of Trade Unions. A great contest between the adherents of the old Party and the Independents took place at the Congress. In the end the resolution condemning the independent agitation amongst the Trade Unions was carried, but it was carried by so narrow a majority that it revealed ominously how far, even in such a Trade Union as that of the Metal-workers, the agitation had taken effect: 64 votes were given for the resolution, but 53 were given against it.

Closer relations between old Socialist party and Government.

Since the spring of 1917, whilst the influence of the old Socialist Party upon the working-class was gradually contracting, its influence upon the Government was extending. It was being more drawn than ever into the mechanism of the State. If the reactionary and Conservative elements were still predominant in high quarters, if the Government still had the whip hand both of Press and of Reichstag, and real power was not always where there was most talk, nevertheless it was plain that the Government felt itself increasingly obliged to make concessions to Social Democracy. Of course, the Government was clever enough to make, as far as possible, such concessions as were greater in appearance than in reality. Of course, further, Social Democracy had on its side to pay to some extent for its advance as a factor in the State by assimilation to the bourgeois parties. The Government's admission of the Majority Socialists to a greater share in the business of the State was of the nature of a compromise. Each side had to sacrifice something to meet the views of the other.

We may see one indication of this extending influence of the Social Democrats in the State in the fact that when the Government appointed in May a special Committee of Members of the Reichstag, chosen in numerical proportion from all the several Groups in the House, to examine the question of constitutional reform and draw up a body of recommendations—a Committee which has not yet[1] terminated its labours—Scheidemann was made its chairman. Besides Scheidemann, the old Social Democrat Party has as its representatives in the Constitution Committee David, Gradnauer, Heine, J. Hoffmann, and Landsberg; the Independents are represented by Haase and Ledebour. The Government, of course, are in no wise bound to accept any of the resolutions of the Constitution Committee. A victory of the democratic element over the Conservative element in the Committee might therefore remain a merely academic one, without any real effect upon the State, if the Government desired to disregard it and was not afraid of democratic opinion in the country. It was significant that Lewald, who before the fall of Bethmann Hollweg attended the meetings of the Committee as representative of the Government—he was then a high official in the Home Office—took up a singularly unsympathetic attitude to proposals of reform in the democratic direction.

The Constitution Committee.

[1] May 31, 1918.

XVI

STOCKHOLM

THE main issue round which the history of German Social Democracy in the summer of 1917 centres is the Stockholm Conference. The idea of a Conference of the Socialists of all countries at Stockholm was an outcome of the Revolution in Russia. In Germany both the old Social Democratic Party and the Independent Socialists regarded the idea with favour —though for somewhat different reasons.

The idea of the Stockholm Conference and the German Socialist Parties.

The Majority Social Democrats, no doubt, hoped that a Conference of Socialists at Stockholm would tend to increase in enemy countries the number of those who were ready to conclude a peace with the Central Powers on terms which would allow Germany to come out of the war without loss. The Germans had been accustomed to a leading rôle in International Socialist Congresses before the war, and the Majority leaders may well have felt that, had they once representatives of the enemy countries brought within the scope of their direct personal influence and within the sound of their living voice, such Comrades would return home with their obstinacy softened and would act as a softening agency upon the working-classes of their respective countries.

The Independent Socialists of Germany, one gathers, regarded the proposed Conference in quite

another way. They did not share the confidence of the Majority in the good case of the German State, nor did they suppose that if the German Socialists were confronted with the Socialists of the enemy lands, the result would be to give the foreign Comrades a less unfavourable view of the German Government than they had at present. The Independents rather saw in the Conference an opportunity for speaking out before the Socialists of the world more freely than they could do at home. They saw themselves in a position to secure the condemnation by the whole body of International Socialism of the new principles professed by their Social Democrat antagonists. They would stand before their fellow-countrymen, no longer a harassed and hampered Minority, but powerful accusers with the great assembly on their side. They realized that it was not a case of inducing other countries to accept the German peace terms, as outlined by the Majority, but of inducing the German people to recognize the justice of some at any rate of the conditions of peace laid down by their enemies. If the views of the Majority were shown to have the whole body of non-German Socialist opinion against them, the Independents hoped that such recognition would be helped on in Germany, as the result of a Stockholm Conference, and a peace be secured such as true Social Democracy would approve.

The German Extremists would have nothing to do with Stockholm at all. Franz Mehring addressed the following letter to the Petrograd Soviet:—

"The projected International Conference of Socialists at Stockholm is intended to promote peace. As German Socialists, we protest energetically against the admission to the Stockholm Conference of the German Majority Socialists, who have supported the German Government throughout this

war. We refuse to take part in a Conference at which the Majority Socialists of Germany are present, and we call upon our Russian Comrades to prevent the presence at the Stockholm Conference of any representatives of the German Majority Socialists. If these so-called Socialists were allowed to attend the Stockholm Conference, *no purpose would be served except to promote the interests of the German Government.* If the Socialists of different countries desire to promote peace, it is impossible for them to do this in co-operation with the Imperial German Government. Such Socialists as have supported the German Government in its war policy must be excluded from the Stockholm Conference. The admission of Scheidemann and Südekum and all the other so-called Socialists who have been the faithful slaves of the German Government would be a severe blow to International Socialism and to the genuine Socialists of Germany."

The preliminary discussion in Stockholm.

In the end, as we know, the autumn of 1917 was not destined to see any World Conference of Socialists at Stockholm. Representatives of the Socialist bodies in Germany and the countries allied with Germany, in Russia and various neutral countries, did indeed visit Stockholm in the course of the summer to discuss preliminaries with Branting and the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee, but the matter never got beyond preliminaries. In August a complexity of events, which need not here be discussed, resulted in the Socialist World Conference being postponed to an indefinite future. Yet the preliminary discussions between German Social Democrats and neutral Socialists were not without their effect in clearing the air. For one thing, the German Social Democrats of the Majority seem to have received a shock at coming into contact with the opinion of the outside world. However much they may have learnt of that opinion from newspapers—and they were probably pretty well acquainted with

it on paper—to touch it in living individuals was another thing. They had never realized before what it was to stand under the reprobation of the world! Another result of the preliminary discussions was that it led to the representatives both of the Majority Social Democrats and of the Independent Socialists giving a fresh formulation of the terms which they were prepared to stand by as reasonable terms of peace. The Minority, through their representatives at Stockholm and through their Manifesto, were indeed enabled to speak out to some extent before the world, as they had hoped, though not to the same extent as they could have done in a general debate; and the world on its side was enabled to know more definitely where both Majority and Minority stood.[1]

The Majority Delegates at Stockholm.

The German Majority delegates sent to Stockholm were Ebert, the President of the Party; Scheidemann, Hermann Müller, David, Molkenbuhr, Richard Fischer, Legien, Bauer, and Sassebach. They left Berlin at the end of May and reached Stockholm, by way of Copenhagen, on June 3. On the following day they had their first official conversation with the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee. Scheidemann defended the action of the Party on August 4, 1914, and claimed that, so far from its having accomplished nothing, the Russian

[1] It had been intended to hold at Stockholm, simultaneously with the preliminary discussions concerning the (political) World Socialist Conference, a (non-political) World Trade Union Conference. Many individuals, like Legien, might be delegates to both Conferences. A certain number of Trade Union representatives, however, who met in Stockholm in June (none from the Entente countries) decided to postpone the Trade Union Conference to September and change its place of meeting to Switzerland.

Revolution should be put down to its credit![1] David also spoke, repeating the stock German arguments about England's commercial jealousy of Germany, about the Entente being a vast "World Partition Syndicate," etc., and he attempted to present the concatenation of events in the fateful twelve days of 1914 in such a way as to make the Entente Powers appear the guilty parties and Germany innocent. As for what had happened in Belgium, England, he said, was responsible! Yet although, according to this account, the first two speeeches had adventured themselves upon the perilous field of the *Schuldfrage* (Question of Guilt), Ebert in the ensuing discussion seems to have deprecated its being touched upon in the public conference. The business in hand, he said, was not to apportion blame; a General Conference should confine itself strictly to the question of peace. It was not a tribunal before which the Party had to clear itself.

There are indications that relations between the German Majority representatives and the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee were not altogether harmonious. On June 11 and 12 further meetings took place, at which the questions of Alsace-Lorraine and Belgium were more particularly discussed. The Dutch-Scandinavian Committee had drawn up a *questionnaire* to be addressed to all the delegations. The German Majority representatives now handed in the written memorandum which contained their answer.

The Majority Manifesto.

It is easy, upon the basis of the Majority answer, to give a fairly clear statement of their position. They desire, they say, a "peace by understanding" *Frieden der Verständigung*). This means, in their mouths, a peace in which all discussion of the responsibility for the war (the

[1] *Vorwärts*, June 9, 1917.

Schuldfrage) is to be waived; a sponge is simply to be drawn over the account, and the Central Powers are to go back to the map of July 1914.[1] The Central Powers are not to come out of the war with any territorial gains—in this matter the Majority declare themselves emphatically against the Pan-German annexationists; but neither are they to come out with any territorial losses. Neither Alsace nor Lorraine is to be restored to France, nor are the Polish districts to be re-united to Poland, though the German Majority so far recognize the principle of the "self-determination of nationalities" as to demand that Alsace-Lorraine should be given equality of rights as a Federal State within the German Empire, and the Prussian Poles be allowed the free use of their mother-tongue and liberty to cultivate their national genius and culture. Germany's over-sea colonies are to be given back to her entire. On the side of the Entente Powers, on the other hand, the Majority sympathize with efforts to modify the map of 1914. They would like Ireland, Egypt, and India to be detached from the British Empire, Morocco from France, Poland and Finland from Russia, Tripoli from Italy, Thibet from China, and Korea from Japan. England is also to renounce her command of the narrow places upon the great lines of oceanic traffic, of the Straits of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and the outlet of the Red Sea by Aden; the United States also, one

[1] "We do not seek to evade a discussion of the question of guilt, but we cannot see how the aim of the Conference can be furthered by such discussion. The business in hand is not to dispute about what is past, but to come to an understanding about the future, especially as to the quickest way of bringing about a durable peace in accordance with our principles and ideals."

gathers, their command of the Panama Canal. "All important straits and canals connecting oceans[1] are to be put under international control." Nor is Germany to suffer any special pecuniary loss. The Majority repudiate altogether the idea that Germany in particular should pay for the material damage done in Belgium or Northern France. If any State after the war needs help from outside to start its economic life again, the Majority imply that Germany might pay its quota by common agreement, but would do no more. A peace based on such terms would, they opine, satisfy the formula "a peace without annexations or indemnities."

Such a peace once established, the Majority express their desire for many of those things which Socialists, and indeed men of liberal views generally, desire—a more fully elaborated international law, an International Court of Arbitration, and reduction of armaments. They further wish such principles of international law to be established as would prevent a Power strong at sea from using that strength in war-time to the disadvantage of an antagonist like Germany. The right of capture at sea in war-time is to be abolished, contraband defined so as to exclude foodstuffs and raw material for clothing (presumably wool and cotton), postal intercourse between neutrals or between belligerents and neutrals not to be interfered with. There is to be no economic war against Germany after this war. The treaties of peace are to secure freedom of commercial intercourse and restore the "Most Favoured Nation" clause. Free Trade is to be regarded as the ideal, to which such gradual approximation as is possible should be made,

[1] "Canals connecting *oceans*" would presumably not include the Kiel Canal.

and meantime there is to be the Open Door in the colonies.[1]

The Majority affirm that they are ready to work for peace—indeed, have been working for peace since the beginning of the war—it being always understood that by this they mean a peace on terms such as those here indicated. The object of the Stockholm Conference, as they understand it, is to bring about an agreement between themselves and the Socialists of the enemy countries by which these too will bring pressure upon their respective Governments to conclude peace—that is, be it still understood, a peace on the German Social Democrat Majority's terms, what they euphemistically term "a peace by understanding."

On June 10 the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* called attention to public utterances of several of the individuals composing the Majority delegation. These implied, it said, that the individuals in question desired the establishment of German naval supremacy in the world, the creation of *Mitteleuropa,* the annexation of extensive territories in Asia, and the creation of a vast German colonial empire in Africa, composed of territories wrested from England. It was "bare-faced hypocrisy," the Minority organ protested, for such men to go to Stockholm as the champions of a peace "without annexations and without indemnities."

The Minority Delegates at Stockholm.

The Majority delegates left Stockholm on June 13. On June 21 five Minority delegates arrived—Haase, Bernstein, Kautsky, Stadthagen, and Herzfeld. It would probably have been awkward had there been a possibility of the two parties meeting in Stockholm. The feeling

[1] Presumably "colonies" here means Crown colonies, not self-governing colonies.

which divided the Independents from the leaders of the old Party had now reached such a pitch that (as Kautsky tells us) [1] it was considered a serious difficulty in the way of the Stockholm Conference that the Independents shrank from the idea of their knees touching those of the Majority representatives at the same table! Yet Stockholm attracted them. Surrounded as they were in Germany by antagonism, and recognizing a certain measure of reasonableness on the side of the Entente, they caught at the idea of an interchange of thoughts, in living speech, man to man, with the foreign Comrades whom the strife of nations had made their enemies. "Our journey will not be useless," Haase is reported to have said to a newspaper interviewer before leaving Germany. "The arrival of the Russian delegates is assured, and there will be French and English Comrades passing through Stockholm. They will not be allowed to confer with us formally, I know; yet nobody can forbid me from greeting Ramsay Macdonald, for instance, in a friendly way and having a talk with him." [2] The five delegates at once got to work on conferences with the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee. A few days later they were joined by some other Comrades—Wengels, Hofer, Ledebour, and Oskar Cohn.

The three principal speeches before the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee were made by Haase, Bernstein, and Kautsky.

Haase defended the Independents against the charge of having wantonly broken through Party discipline and split the German Social Democrat Party. He argued that from the beginning of the war the

[1] *Die Neue Zeit* for August 31, 1917, p. 508.

[2] The *Pesti Naplo*, quoted by the *Düsseldorfer Generalanzeiger*, June 23.

principles for which the Minority had stood had been precisely those which the formula "a peace without annexations or indemnities" was intended to embody. They had done their utmost to bring the Reichstag Group and the Party Directorate to adhere to these principles. It was only when all their attempts proved vain that they had felt obliged to break through Party discipline, because the claim of Party loyalty was overridden by higher loyalty to the cause of the proletariat and of world peace. It was no case of a misunderstanding which further explanations might have cleared away. There was a profound conflict of fundamental principles. The Majority professed, indeed, to accept the formula "peace without annexations and indemnities." But that with them was nothing but a tactical accommodation to a momentary convenience.

Bernstein dealt with the crucial "Question of Guilt." It was idle, he said, to try to rule out this question, as the Majority did. The representatives of countries other than Germany demanded that it should be squarely dealt with, and to rule out its discussion would only seem like giving undue favour to the German side. The fight for peace, for a peace programme in accordance with the principles of democratic justice, could not be effectually carried on, unless there was a clear understanding of the character of the war and of the part taken by the several Governments. Such an understanding could quite well be derived from a study of the diplomatic correspondence published by the Governments themselves. It could only further the cause of peace if at a General Conference Comrades from the different belligerent countries spoke out their opinions freely on these controversial questions.[1]

[1] "A truly Socialist Party cannot oppose the desire for a discussion of the question of guilt. Such a discussion, if

Kautsky dealt more specifically with the terms of peace. Both the Majority and the Minority, he said, accepted the same formula "a peace without annexations and indemnities." But if one looked at the guiding resolutions as to war-aims passed by the Reichstag Group in August 1915, or at the recent Majority memorandum drawn up at Stockholm, one saw that the same words covered a wholly different meaning. The construction the Majority put upon the formula was incompatible with the principles of International Socialism. It was steeped in the spirit of Nationalist *Machtpolitik* and in the militarist mode of thinking, since the attitude of the Majority to the several problems varied according to the military situation of the moment. He ended by insisting that a Conference would be no good if its result were merely a beautiful scheme of peace terms on paper, if it did not initiate a real energetic campaign in all countries for such a peace as a Social Democracy, true to its principles, could approve.

The Minority Manifesto.

During the early days of July the Minority delegations handed their memorandum to the Dutch-Scandinavian Committee, embodying their reply to the Committee's series of questions.

The Minority memorandum agrees in general import with the Majority answer, so far as regards the principles of international intercourse after the war. Only

carried on in a Socialist spirit, cannot but have an enlightening and helpful effect. . . . Any one who tries to prevent the examination of the question of guilt does poor service to the Socialist work for peace; for that work can only be successfully accomplished if it is based on the foundation of an honest recognition of facts (*Sozialistische Auslandspolitik*, Berlin, August 15, 1917).

the Minority go farther. Whereas the Majority ask for reduction of armaments, the Minority ask for universal disarmament; whereas the Majority speak of a gradual reduction of tariffs and the "Most Favoured Nation" clause, the Minority demand "the fullest freedom of trade between nations."

The great point about the Minority memorandum is that, instead of going back simply to the map of July 1914, they are prepared to revise that map in the interests of justice and national freedom, even if that involves a territorial loss to the German Empire or one of its allies. They pronounce it desirable not only that Serbia should be restored as an independent State, but that Serbia's desires for political union with the people of the same stock now under Habsburg rule should be satisfied; and similarly that the Poles should be reunited in one national State, both Prussia and Austria relinquishing their Polish districts to be joined with what was Russian Poland.[1]

As to Alsace-Lorraine, the Minority expressly recognize that these provinces were torn from France in 1871 against the will of their inhabitants, and state that there can be no durable peace there till the inhabitants are allowed to decide their destiny by a genuinely free *plébiscite*. The *plébiscite*, they suggest, might take place with greater freedom and tranquillity if the question were put to the people of the provinces at a certain defined period after the end of the war. Even if they decided to sever their connection with the German Empire, the territorial loss would be more than made up to Germany by what Germany would gain economically, politically, and morally. Such a view, they point out, is no departure from the authoritative

[1] From the "Preliminary Statement" communicated to the Press by the Minority delegates, dated June 29, 1917.

tradition of German Social Democracy; it accords with the view expressed by Engels as late as 1892.

As to Belgium, its "complete independence, political and economic, is inevitable [*unabweisbar*]. In fulfilment of the solemn promise given by the German Government at the beginning of the war, compensation must be given to the Belgian people for the damage caused by the war, especially for the economic values taken out of the country.[1] Such compensation has nothing to do with any kind of war-indemnity; by the latter it is to be understood a despoiling of the vanquished by the conqueror, and for that reason we are against war-indemnities."

The position of the Minority with regard to the recovery of the German colonies is curious. The difficulty was that the Minority had regularly maintained that the possession of colonies was a drawback rather than an advantage to the working-class. They also disapproved apparently of even the races of savage Africa being subjected to European rule without an expression of their national, or tribal, will. And yet they shrank from declaring that the Powers which had taken away Germany's colonies might retain them. "Whilst therefore neither considerations of right nor the economic interests of the working-classes require it, yet political *sagacity* [*Klugheit*] (and that only) prescribes that no such transference of territory in the colonial field should take place, in consequence of the treaty of peace, as may furnish a ground for fresh wars." What transference of territory would, as a matter of fact, furnish a ground for fresh wars, the memorandum prudently does not attempt to prejudge.

The peace terms desired by the Minority, as thus stated, are seen to coincide in large part with the

[1] This implies that the compensation must be given *by Germany*.

programme, so far as it has been announced, of Great Britain and its Allies. But the Minority differ from the Allied peoples in their view of the means by which the peace indicated is to be reached. The obstacle is plainly the will of the Central Powers, and the view of the Allied peoples is that this will cannot be overcome without war. That the Minority deny. The theory professed in their memorandum is that war is a mistaken means, even when it is applied to bring about changes in themselves desirable. In their view the only force which can satisfactorily overcome the will of Imperialist Governments is that of the international proletariat, organized on Socialist principles. The Socialist body in all countries ought to demand a plain answer from the several Governments to the question whether they are willing to enter on peace negotiations at once on the basis of the Socialist programme, and if any Government declines or gives an evasive answer, the Socialists in that country ought to refuse to vote war-credits and hinder the Government to the best of its ability in the prosecution of the war.

This statement, it must be admitted, does not make the mind of the Minority altogether clear. It may be asked what, in their view, should happen if the Governments on one side declared their willingness to enter upon peace negotiations on the basis of the Socialist programme as outlined by the Minority and the Governments on the other side refused? Ought the Governments which accepted the Socialist programme to cease from their attempts to compel by the pressure of war the other Governments to accept it? And ought the Socialist bodies in the countries whose Governments accepted their programme still to hinder the prosecution of the war? If the Minority say "Yes" to this question, what is the sense of their making

the opposition of the Socialist body depend upon whether the Governments accept the Socialist programme or not? Why bring in the Socialist peace programme at all in this connection? Why not say simply that in all circumstances the Socialist body ought to oppose war? If, on the other hand, the Minority say "No," what is the sense of implying that war is always an improper means of bringing about changes of the map? And the case put is not merely a theoretical one. It actually corresponds closely with the situation to-day. The programme of the Allied Powers, so far as it has been defined, does not, indeed, correspond at all points with the Minority programme. The French Government, for instance, appears adverse to the idea of a *plébiscite* to determine the destiny of Alsace-Lorraine; and it may be questioned whether the British Government would consider, in the matter of the German colonies, the "sagacity" described in the Minority memorandum to be really wise. Yet the correspondence on the whole between the peace terms desired by the Minority and the declared programme of the Allies is remarkable; the Minority programme is much closer to the programme of the Allies than it is to the views of those British pacifists who combat with acrimony the notion of the subject peoples passing from under Hohenzollern, Habsburg, or Ottoman rule.

The Minority deputation took their leave of Stockholm early in July and returned to Germany.

Effect of Stockholm upon Majority: Scheidemann's article.

Meantime the effect upon the Majority deputation of their visit to Stockholm had become manifest in Germany. On June 24 an article by Scheidemann appeared in *Vorwärts* which struck a note of new urgency:—

We Social Democrats cannot be said to have a light task. We go abroad to hear the Fatherland cursed on all sides and

consigned to the lowest depths of hell, as the stronghold of the blackest reaction, whilst England, France, and America are praised as the bringers of light and freedom to the whole world. We hear William II described as a tyrannical war-fanatic and Bethmann as his pliable and cunningly worked tool. . . . Then we return home to be told: "What you have done in Stockholm is a good work. You have convinced yourselves that democracy is a swindle. Prussia-Germany, with her three-class electoral system and strong monarchy, backed by us *Landräte*[1] and Junkers, is the finest country in the world. Therefore let things remain as they are. Don't worry further about political reforms." . . . I think we have all returned from Stockholm with the belief that we are on the right track. We wished to pursue and carry to its conclusion the peace policy initiated in December. Then came what we had tried so hard to avoid [i.e. the unrestricted submarine war], repeatedly warning the Government that it must end in war with America. And thereby our enemies' confidence of victory has been increased and the war prolonged. . . . What has happened cannot be undone. Yet conscience obliges us to see a way to stop the massacre of nations now proceeding. And that is how I came in Stockholm to the following unalterable conviction: *It cannot be done until Germany is completely democratised.* It is not our enemies, it is our friends abroad—alas! too few—who keep telling us: "The time has come at last when you must alter your political conditions at home, when you must show the outside world that the differences between you and them are not after all so great or so unbridgeable. You are one of the most thoroughly educated peoples in the world, and you must not stick to principles of government which belong to the world's childhood. Only when you achieve reform in these matters will you have found the way you seek, the way to universal understanding between the peoples." . . . We say extensive and radical reforms *are imperative at once.* There can be no further delay, unless our people are to suffer serious political injury. We must, alas! in spite of Stockholm, anticipate a fourth war winter. It is our duty

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[1] The representatives of the Government in the provincial administration.

to obviate it, if obviated it can be with honour. One means to this end—not an infallible one, it is true—would be the democratization of Germany. . . . Let it not be supposed that the people will remain ignorant of the constitutional differences between Germany and other countries. Although overstated, the fact of "here autocracy, there democracy" has been clearly put forward and who can deny the effects it may have? . . . We Social Democrats took up this cry long before there was any thought of the war, and from the first day of war we have declared that freely given reform is the speediest way to peace. Only much later, when the enemy observed that Germany in this matter of the *Neuorienterung* had come to a deadlock, when Russia achieved her gigantic revolution and America entered the war, were we faced with the humiliation of having our own demand imposed upon us as a war-formula. To this stroke—perhaps the cleverest that our enemy has struck—there is but one possible counter-stroke. Germany, standing as she does safe to the four winds—Germany, who has not yielded to the strength of any conqueror, must grant her own reforms to her own people.

The Stockholm report before the Party Directorate.

Two days after this article appeared a meeting of the Party Directorate took place in Berlin (June 26), to receive from the delegates to Stockholm an account of what they had done there. Scheidemann and Ebert spoke and the Directorate approved in a formal resolution. In Scheidemann's speech the bitter feeling he had brought back from Stockholm again betrayed itself. He declared himself, indeed, generally satisfied with the way things had gone, but it was clear that the adverse opinion he had encountered abroad still rankled. Only, speaking as he did now among Comrades, he did not vent his impatience, as in his *Vorwärts* article, against the backward obstinacy of the ruling caste in Germany, but against the false brethren whose utterances, transmitted to Stockholm, had done

so much to stultify the Majority delegates' efforts to persuade foreign Socialists that the conduct of the German Majority during the war had been admirable. He was particularly angry with two articles in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* which had aimed at showing that the claim of the Majority to have worked for peace did not correspond with the facts.[1]

The difficulty of the Majority position.

The difficulty in the position of the Majority is that they have, as it were, to carry on simultaneously war on three fronts. They have to attack the Government as undemocratic in constitution, so far as their object is to procure internal reform, and as ambiguous on the question of peace, so far as they are anxious to bring about a peace on the definite basis of the *status quo;* at the same time they have to defend the government against foreigners, and also against the Minority at home. Against foreigners they have to argue that the German Government, in appearance reactionary, is really just as democratic as the British, French, and American Governments—or even much more democratic—and has done everything it could do to prove its genuine readiness for peace, whilst the enemy only rebuffs its overtures with scorn. Against the Minority also they have to insist upon the Government's will for peace, in order to show that it is right for Socialists to support it in carrying on a defensive war, but in the matter of democratic reforms. they speak to the

[1] An attempt was made by the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* to circulate the two articles in question as a pamphlet entitled "Truth about the Peace Policy of the Government Socialists," but the pamphlet was suppressed by the military Censorship at Leipzig, an instance of the way the Government continually interferes in the controversy between the Majority and the Independents in favour of the Majority.

Minority as being equally with them determined to get reform carried through. Since Scheidemann and his friends have to carry on all these three controversies —with the Government, with foreigners, with the Minority—simultaneously, it is no wonder their different utterances show strange contrasts.

The same Scheidemann, for instance, who could speak so stoutly in his article of June 24 as to the imperative necessity of getting the institutions of Germany democratized without delay is reported a little while before as having said to Russian journalists at Stockholm:—

> It appears to me that the German people has already the power to exercise a considerably greater influence over its Government than is the case in the so-called democratic States. . . . I can only wish democracy to advance also in England, France, and America, where the governing power is in the possession of a small Imperialist capitalist class with interests of its own, from whose hands the mass of less well-to-do people has to accept its destiny. . . . Not till these countries as well have been really democratized—i.e. till the masses of the people have the determining voice—dare we hope to reach a state of durable international peace.

Scheidemann's colleague, Dr. David, always ready to take up the cudgels, even more energetically than Scheidemann, on behalf of the German Government against foreigners, had followed a similar line of argument in the article published on June 22 in the Danish *Socialdemocraten* in reply to the French Socialist Thomas:—

> The governing German bureaucracy is not so helplessly dominated by Imperialist-capitalist interests as the Governments of the so-called democracies of the West. Hard as we strive in Germany (one hopes with success) to realize free conditions in internal politics and to establish a real democracy,

just so little do we share the illusion that a real democracy exists in France, England, or America. . . . In reality the workers, and the unpropertied masses generally, in those countries have not more, but less, influence over the diplomacy of their respective Governments than the workers in Germany have.

This is the voice of the German Majority Socialists when they speak with the foreign enemy in their mind: addressing himself to the home public, Scheidemann declares that the backward institutions of Germany, in contrast with those of the democratic countries, constitute a discredit which no time must be lost in removing.[1]

[1] How the Majority Socialists at this time, from a desire at one moment to represent the institutions of Germany as frightfully backward, and at another moment exceptionally democratic, swung between the two conceptions, may be seen from some remarks in the *Fränkische Tagespost* (June 27): "The policy of the Socialist Party at home has gained through the negotiations at Stockholm. We all were too much implicated in the war policy of our country. . . . Some of us, having become too excited during the war, fell into the habit of painting the Constitutions, the institutions, and the conditions of the countries at war with us in exceedingly dark colours, while in judging the Constitutions, the institutions, and the conditions, of our own by no means newly arisen country, we, forgetting all our old criticisms, became remarkably indulgent. In this respect Stockholm has helped to cure us." Dr. David, writing in *Vorwärts* (September 16, 1917), admitted, perhaps in an unguarded moment, that "a reasonable and strictly true representation of domestic conditions" was not possible at the present time in public utterance.

XVII

THE JULY CRISIS

Government pressed by the Majority.

In the months following the Stockholm conversations we see the leaders of the Majority bring more pressure to bear upon the Government to carry out internal democratic reforms and declare itself with greater plainness ready to conclude peace on the *status quo* basis. And to this pressure we see the Government, at one point or another, giving way, but always, so far as it can, making concessions which concede nothing substantial. It might seem that democratic reform of some kind had come nearer, but it had not yet passed out of the region of promises and hopes. And as to peace terms, no pressure had yet induced the Government to say straight out, even in the single matter of Belgium, "We are willing to restore Belgium its independence whole and entire." Amongst other concessions the Government attempted to conciliate the Majority Socialists by giving them an increased share in the business of government, so that one immediate effect of the Socialist pressure was to make the intimacy of the Social Democrat Party and the Government closer still.

Scheidemann, it will be remembered, had already, before he went to Stockholm, been appointed chairman of the Reichstag Constitution Committee. The new impulse he brought back from Stockholm made him take an almost threatening tone. He summoned a meeting for July 3 to discuss the question of a uni-

versal and equal franchise in the Federal States. On June 27 *Vorwärts* had a leading article in which it referred to the implacable opposition which proposals of electoral reform were certain to meet with from the Conservative elements in the Committee. And then it gave a plain warning that if the Constitution Committee failed in the matter of electoral reform "the interest of the Socialists in the further manœuvres would be—to put it carefully—*very small*"; in other words, they would wash their hands of the whole business.

Scheidemann threatens as to work of Constitution Committee.

Reactionary circles in Germany were provoked by Scheidemann's new tone to a defiant reply. Because Stockholm had turned out a fiasco, the *National-Liberale Korrespondenz* wrote (June 29), Scheidemann tried to cover up the defeat by making a noise in Germany:

> Herr Scheidemann cannot alter that fact by attempting to play the strong man in Germany and trumpeting democratically. We have never believed in the strength of his policy. But to-day it has unquestionably lost strength all round. That will be shown him very plainly and very painfully by the decision which he announces for July 3. And if he then withdraws in a huff from the "manœuvres" of the Constitution Committee, there will not be many who will be angry with him on that account.

Things at this time were working up in Germany to the crisis of the first half of July. To that crisis many factors contributed, which it is not here the place to try to analyse. But the pressure of the Social Majority upon the Government to obtain (1) a definite instalment or pledge of democratic reform, (2) a clearer statement from the Government that it was prepared to conclude peace on the *status quo* basis,

The crisis of July. Can Socialists become Ministers?

undoubtedly was one important factor. In July the Government had to ask for more war-credits, and it was understood to be the intention of the Social Democrat Reichstag group to refuse to vote them if their demands were not satisfied. According to one account they definitely communicated a threat to this effect to Bethmann Hollweg.

The "Government Socialists," as their enemies called them, had a new sense of power upon the Government machine. So far had things changed from the old days when they had stood in sheer antagonism to the State, because the State was something in which they had no share, that the question whether they ought to accept posts as Ministers, and on what terms, had come into the field of practical politics. An article discussing this question, by Stampfer, appeared in *Vorwärts* on July 11. Stampfer regarded the idea of the Social Democrats actually entering the Government with shrinking. He would, he said, prefer that a Parliamentary Ministry should be formed, without the Socialists, but on a programme which the Socialists could support. If, however, a Parliamentary Cabinet could not be formed unless the Socialists joined it, they ought not in that case to shirk responsibility. Only if they entered the Government it must be on two conditions, that the Government *régime* should be democratized, and that the Government should declare itself plainly for a *status quo* peace. Unless those conditions were insisted upon, the world would not regard the admission of Socialists to power as a victory for Socialism, but as a sign that the Socialists had come completely into line with the Government.

Had Bethmann Hollweg been able to go as far in satisfying the Social Democrats' demand for a clear statement on the peace question as he was able to go

in meeting their demand for democratic reform, he might have retained their support. But on the peace question he continued to hedge, and the Social Democrats, who were not confident that even in the matter of democratic reform he was sincere, abandoned him. It was therefore of no avail to save him that on July 12 a Royal Rescript[1] was published, ordering that a Bill to establish a system of *equal* voting in Prussia should be introduced in the Landtag before the next elections. This might have temporarily appeased the Socialist and Radical cry for reform, if the Chancellor had given satisfactory assurances on the peace question.

Fall of Bethmann: Michaelis, Chancellor.

It had been known for some days that the Centre and Radical Parties in the Reichstag were going to combine with the Social Democrat (Majority) Group to carry a resolution in favour of a peace "without annexations." On the 14th Bethmann Hollweg resigned, and Herr Georg Michaelis was appointed by the Emperor in his place.

On July 19 the *bloc* of Party Groups which constituted a majority of the *Reichstag* carried their resolution against the Conservatives, the National-Liberals, and the Independent Socialists. Its significance lay in the sentences:—

The Reichstag resolution of July 19.

The Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples. With such a peace *forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are inconsistent.* The Reichstag also rejects all

[1] Not an *Imperial* Rescript, as it is sometimes called. William II could only issue an order as to the internal Constitution of Prussia in his character of King of Prussia, not as German Emperor.

schemes which aim at economic barriers and hostility between the peoples [*Absperrung und Verfeindung*] after the war.

Before the debate on the resolution began, the new Chancellor made his inaugural statement of policy. The House waited to hear how he would define his attitude, the attitude of the Government, to the "peace resolution" about to be brought forward. If he accepted it whole-heartedly, that meant a breach with the Conservatives with whom his past, and probably his personal, sympathies associated him. If he refused it, it meant that he must be prepared for a refusal on the part of the Reichstag majority to vote supplies. Five days before (on Saturday, July 14), he, together with Hindenburg and Ludendorff, had had a private meeting with the leaders of the several Party Groups in Helfferich's garden at the Home Office. He does not seem to have given any very explicit assurance that he would adopt the resolution, but the impression left by this conversation upon the representatives of the Parties supporting the resolution was that he would. When he came to the crucial question in his inaugural speech, he got out of the dilemma as follows:—

The peace must provide the basis for a lasting reconciliation of the nations. It must, as your resolution puts it, prevent the further creation of hostility among the nations by economic barriers. It must provide a guarantee that the armed alliance of our enemies does not develop into an economic offensive against us. *These ends are attainable within the limits of your resolution, as I construe it* [*wie ich ihn auffasse*].

Then as to internal reform the new Chancellor spoke as follows:—

It goes without saying that I stand upon the ground of the All-highest Rescript of July 12 concerning the franchise in

Prussia. I consider it advantageous and necessary that closer touch should be established between the great Parties and the Government. I am ready—so far as this is possible without impairing the federal character and the constitutional basis of the Empire—to do everything possible to impart to this co-operation more life and efficiency. I also consider it desirable that relations of confidence between Parliament and Government should be made closer by *calling to leading executive positions men who, in addition to their personal qualification for the post concerned, possess also the full confidence of the great Parties in the popular representative body.* All this, of course, is possible only on the assumption that the other side recognizes that the constitutional right of the Imperial administration to conduct our policy must not be narrowed. I am not willing to permit the conduct of affairs to be taken out of my hands.

Would the Social Democrat (Majority) Group consider that these very qualified assurances gave them as much as they required in order to vote the credits? Scheidemann announced that they would.

Useful service can be rendered [only] by a Government which adopts this resolution from conviction. Is the Government represented by Herr Michaelis such a Government? You have heard his statement and will already have formed your own opinion. . . . I take it that, on closer consideration, the Imperial Chancellor must come to the conclusion that there is no further room for any foreign policy other than that which we have outlined here. . . . A powerful policy of peace-loving defence cannot be pursued without cheerful recognition of democratic progress. In this respect much in the Imperial Chancellor's speech sounded fairly promising, but it could not satisfy me. . . . We will concede the new credits in the spirit of our accompanying resolution—not as a vote of confidence in the Imperial Chancellor. We have always conceded the credits to the country alone; we concede them to the German people, of whom we know that nine-tenths take their stand on the ground of our peace programme.

The Independent Socialists refused to join the Parties which constituted the majority *bloc*. They moved a separate resolution:—

The Reichstag is striving for a peace without annexations of any kind whatever, and without a war-indemnity, on the basis of the right of peoples to self-determination. It expects especially the restoration of Belgium and the reparation of the wrong done to her.

The Reichstag demands the introduction of immediate peace negotiations on the basis of this programme. It asks for an international agreement for general disarmament, freedom of international trade and communications, as well as unrestricted freedom of movement; also international agreement for the protection of the workers from exploitation, recognition of the equality of rights belonging to all the inhabitants of a State without regard to State-allegiance, sex, race, language, or religion; protection of national minorities; obligatory international arbitration for the settlement of all disputes.

For the establishment of this peace and for the carrying out of this programme, the most pressing condition is the immediate revocation of the State of Siege. Further, the complete democratization of the whole Constitution and government of the Empire and its component States is requisite—a democratization which will culminate in the creation of a Socialist Republic.

Haase spoke for his party. He began by exposing the inconsistency of the Majority in having threatened Bethmann Hollweg heroically if he did not quit ambiguities on the peace question and then accepting tamely a no less ambiguous statement from the new Chancellor. He passed on to show how little the development of the crisis which had replaced Bethmann by Michaelis had been a victory for democracy. The new Chancellor, he said, was the nominee of the military chiefs, imposed from above, without any reference to the Reichstag. Michaelis was the confi-

dant of Hindenburg and Ludendorff and "nobody will assert that these two men are opposed to plans of annexations and war-indemnities!" The Chancellor had actually told the Reichstag that his statement as to the resolution had been made with the approval of the supreme military authorities! There you had real Prussian militarism. Imagine such a statement being made by the man at the head of the Government in any other country in the world! The Reichstag had even been left completely in the dark as to what men the Government was going to appoint over the several great departments of State—who, for instance, was to be the new Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Then Haase came to the promise with regard to Prussian electoral reform and showed how little it amounted to. The promise was only that a Bill should be introduced in the Prussian Landtag. There was no guarantee that the Bill would be passed. Once before, in 1908, a Bill of this kind had been introduced in fulfilment of a Royal promise. The Bill had been thrown out and there the matter had ended. In this connexion Haase took occasion to observe that the Independents had not, like the Majority, made their peace with Monarchy. The Independents still held that a real democratization of Germany would issue in a Republic.

The democratization of the Empire and the Federal States would tend, more than anything else, to bring about peace. But the appointment of a few parliamentary leaders to Government posts would not mean any advance in that direction.

The large demands of the Pan-Germans, the policy of bluff recommended by Admiral Tirpitz, the hopes held out that a collapse of England was quite near,

were wholly mischievous. The Independents had predicted from the beginning that ruthless submarine war would bring in America.

The formation of the new Reichstag *bloc* was due to the Russian Revolution and its consequences, which had led some annexationists to change their views. But the resolution of the *bloc* was open to various criticisms. Its account of the origin of the war was dishonest. "We do not forget," Haase said, "the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia nor the Austrian preparations for war against Russia, nor the conferences which took place in Berlin on July 5, 1914, nor the activity of Tirpitz and Falkenhayn in those critical days."[1] Then the resolution was not a clear and honest acceptance of the Russian formula "a peace without annexations and indemnities on the basis of the right of peoples to self-determination." Its phrases about "enforced acquisitions of territory" did not exclude attempts to get hold of new territories on pretended grounds of right. And it said absolutely nothing about the self-determination of nations. Nor was it clear that it ruled out indemnities. Some time before Scheidemann's friends had warmly denied that he had ever said, "Let each nation bear its own burden," and Scheidemann himself had recently indicated that he was not averse from the idea of indemnities.

[1] This enigmatic allusion in Haase's speech to conferences on July 5, about which the world generally was ignorant, was the occasion of the publication in the *Times* of certain statements about a conference presided over by the Emperor, which it derived from some person not named. The statements of the *Times'* informant were officially denied in Germany and Austria. Lichnowsky asserts in his memoir that Austria received assurances of German support at this "decisive" conference. See now further the disclosures of Mr. Morgenthau (*Times*, May 30, 1918).

Then the resolution asked for "the freedom of the seas."

What do you mean by that? The progress made by our mercantile fleet before the war was splendid. Our fleet rode proudly through all the seas without let or hindrance. In time of peace the freedom of the seas is under no danger. How do you propose to secure it in war-time? For a social order which no longer generated war—the Socialist order—the freedom of the seas would be no problem. As long as there are wars any belligerent which has the power to restrict the freedom of the seas will do so. What guarantees do you want to prevent that? There is only one guarantee which has any promise of success—universal disarmament and the simultaneous abolition of the right of capture.

Haase next satirized the transparent attempts made from the German side to seduce Russia from its Allies into a separate peace. He spoke of the Manifesto of the Majority delegation in Stockholm. "That declaration was condemned as a complete failure by the Socialists of all enemy and neutral countries, with the single exception of one very small neutral country." In Russia all the Socialist papers had pronounced it by no means calculated to bring peace. Like the German Government, the Majority Socialists were quite incapable of understanding the feelings of other nations and went from blunder to blunder.

On the other hand, there was no ambiguity about the resolution of the Independents. And here Haase read out at length the Manifesto of the Minority delegation at Stockholm. The military Censorship had forbidden its publication in Germany; by reading it out as part of his speech in the Reichstag Haase secured its being reported under the protection of parliamentary privilege. He commented on the fact that while the Censorship suppressed the Minority

Manifesto, it gave large licence to the furious Pan-German propaganda.

The Majority Socialists said they voted the credits to the country, not to the Government. Why, then, had they threatened Bethmann Hollweg that they would not vote the credits, because they had not confidence in his policy? It was a gross self-contradiction at one time to make their voting of the credits depend upon the attitude of the Government and at another time pretend that their voting was not an endorsement of the Government's policy. Supposing the new Chancellor had definitely rejected the resolution, would they have voted the credits? If not, how about "leaving the country undefended" in that case?[1]

"When I stated in this House eighteen months ago," Haase went on, "that the war would end without victors or vanquished, I was shouted down, but now we hear the same thing from all sides."

There was no justification, he asserted with vehemence, for going on with the war. The Chancellor thought that Germany had done enough by holding out the hand last December. There had been, the Chancellor said, no response from the other side. Yes: but why was there no response? Because the offer was really made for its effect at home, in order to neutralize the effect of Wilson's offer of mediation, which was known to be impending, and it was far too

[1] This argument was answered by one of the speakers in the Würzburg Congress two months later. He explained that, supposing the old Party refused to vote war-credits to show their want of confidence in a particular Chancellor, that Chancellor would have to go and be replaced by a Chancellor in whom the Party *had* confidence; the Party would then vote the credits and the country would not lose in the end.

vague in its terms to afford a basis for mediation. The only possible basis for peace proposals was the Russian formula, "a peace without annexations, without indemnities, *and recognising the right of peoples to self-determination.*"

And the German people among the rest must have the right to determine its own destiny. The "authority-State" (*Obrigkeitsstaat*) had no longer any *raison d'être.* It was due to the demands of the Socialists that the Constitution Committee had been formed. Yet in the Committee all proposals in the direction of real responsible parliamentary government had been blocked by the representatives of the non-Socialist Parties.

Haase then passed on to speak of the persecution of the Independent Socialists throughout the country by the Government, of the tyrannous application of the Censorship. Maximilian Harden's paper, *Die Zukunft,* had been suppressed, because it gave extracts from the foreign Press and allowed people to know what was happening abroad. Professor Schücking had been forbidden to correspond with foreign *savants* on the problems of International Law.

> As for the treatment of the members of my Party, you can hardly imagine it. Hundreds of my Party friends have been forbidden for the duration of the war to speak at any meeting whatever, even a private one. So completely have they been robbed of the right to influence public affairs just at a time when public affairs are of such importance. . . . And all this political system has engendered amongst us a system of delation such as Germany has never before experienced, a system which recalls the worst days of Imperial Rome.

The Minority were restrained from conducting newspapers, or their organs were hampered by continuous

vexatious interference, whilst the Majority were allowed to bring out a new paper in Leipzig as a rival to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. "Terrible Draconic sentences have been passed in Königsberg, Stettin, Düsseldorf, and other places against alleged rioters, who acted as they did only because they were driven by hunger and despair." Haase referred to Liebknecht and once more demanded his release. Hundreds of people were now saying just the same things as those for which Liebknecht was condemned, without being committed for high treason. Liebknecht's physique was being ruined in prison by his being employed as a shoemaker. (A voice: "He is being starved to death." Laughter.) "You find the fact of Liebknecht's being starved something humorous!"

"The feeling of the people created by the leaden weight of hunger and the State of Siege is such as to make even the most frivolous and optimistic reflect. You have read of the riots and strikes in Upper and Lower Silesia. Do you think the masses can possibly endure such a state of things for long? Impossible! And when the crash comes, you have no right, at any rate, to be surprised. Every day the working-classes come to understand better that if they are to achieve what they have at heart, they must act. They will rise up against such conditions as these."

Of the two resolutions before the House that of the Independent Socialists was first put. It was rejected by the combined votes of all the other Parties. Only one member of the old Party, Hoch, whom we have already seen as leading that section of the old Party which was nearest to the Independents, voted on this occasion with the Independents. The resolution of the majority *bloc* was then passed by 214 votes to 116. All the old Socialist Group, except Hoch, voted for it, the Centre (with two abstentions)

and the Progressives (with one abstention). The 116 adverse votes were those of the Conservatives, the National Liberals, most of the small *Deutsche Fraktion,* and the Independent Socialists. The Poles abstained from voting.

The war-credits were voted. Only the Independent Socialists voted against them.

Socialists meet the Kaiser.

The closer intimacy between the old Social Democrat Party and the Government was exhibited in symbolical form on the day following the voting of the new war-credits (July 20). Another meeting of a semi-social character took place in the garden of the Ministry of the Interior. The Emperor was present in order to converse personally with the leaders of the different parties, who were invited to meet His Majesty by Dr. Helfferich. Never before had German Social Democrats, as such, waited ceremoniously upon Royalty. Now, at Helfferich's invitation, five of the party leaders repaired to the function—Ebert, Scheidemann, David, Molkenbuhr, and Südekum. The conversations, we are told, between the Emperor and the various members of the Reichstag were lively and unconstrained. With the Social Democrats the Emperor spoke especially about Stockholm. His effusive bonhomie, his free-and-easy carriage, were noticed, also the length of time which he devoted to the Social Democrats. Amongst the Party throughout the country the incident caused great heart-burnings. It gave a new handle to the Independents, and their organs took up against the old Party the cry of *Hofgängerei* ("dancing attendance upon the Court"). *Vorwärts* considered silence the most prudent policy. Other Majority organs defended the action of the leaders: a Party, they argued, which was out for

parliamentary government could not refuse to meet the chief of the State.

At the end of July, Scheidemann delivered a speech in Munich, which was a confident apology for the whole course of action followed by the Majority. He pointed to the Royal Rescript about Prussian electoral reform and the passing of the peace resolution as signal triumphs for the Party. As to the meeting with the Emperor, Scheidemann claimed that his past cleared him from any suspicion of sycophancy. It was he who had forfeited his position as Vice-President of the Reichstag in years gone by, because he would not accompany the other representatives of the Reichstag when they went to pay their respects to the Emperor. And that was not inconsistent with his present attitude. There was a great difference between *asking* to be received and *accepting an invitation* to come. Social Democrats were not boors and did not reply to civil invitations like Zulu Kafirs.

Scheidemann defends policy of old Party.

Both the Pan-Germans at one extreme and the Independent Socialists at the other were already at this time calling attention, each for their own purpose, to the uncomfortable qualifications which had marked the new Chancellor's apparent acceptance of the Majority resolution—"as I construe it." If the Government had not really accepted the resolution, that took off a good deal from the old Party's victory, and both Pan-Germans and Independents were, as a matter of fact, denying that it was a victory at all. Scheidemann in his speech of July 26 brushed aside these criticisms. Any one who had taken part in the Reichstag's proceedings must recognize, he said, that Michaelis understood the resolution in the same sense as it was understood by the parliamentary *bloc*.

(Unfortunately, the Conservatives and Independents, who had taken part in the proceedings of July 19, did not recognize this, and indeed it was being shown that the different constituents of the *bloc* did not themselves all understand the resolution alike.) Scheidemann admitted that Michaelis might perhaps on further reflection have regretted that he had not expressed himself rather more clearly.

The final part of Scheidemann's speech was devoted to the democratization of Germany. He was now talking to German Social Democrats and could therefore speak freely of the backward character of German political institutions. On the burning question whether Socialists should take office in the German Government, Scheidemann on July 26 said that they must depend on whether real parliamentary government was established. He could not conceive the Party allowing one of its men to take office in a Government which continued to be what it was at present. "Germany," he concluded, "is surrounded by enemies to-day, but it is also *surrounded by democracy*. In Germany a Socialist may hardly even become a night-watchman! There must be an end to all this. There must be no more military predominance, no more Junker rule. The right of the people, the will of the people, must be our highest law."

A Socialist enters the Government.

A few days after this speech of Scheidemann's a Socialist accepted a post in the Government. At least, among the new appointments brought about by the reconstruction of the Government under Michaelis was that of Herr Doktor August Müller[1] to the post of Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the War Food Control

[1] Not to be confused with Hermann Müller.

Department. Dr. Müller had already been employed for some time on the staff of the department. *Vorwärts* (August 7) hailed the appointment as implying that it was now no longer any bar to office of any kind that a man should acknowledge himself a Social Democrat. As a matter of fact, Dr. Müller seems to be a Socialist of a somewhat dubious complexion. If he is formally a member of the Social Democrat Party, he stands, at any rate, according to a phrase used at the Würzburg Congress, so far to the Right that he "can hardly be discerned with the naked eye." But he calls himself a Social Democrat and contributes to the Imperialist-Socialist periodical, *Sozialistische Monatshefte*.

XVIII

MICHAELIS PROVES A DISAPPOINTMENT

The old Party claims a victory.

THE Royal Rescript as to Prussian electoral reform, the passing of the peace resolution of the parliamentary *bloc,* the appointment of a number of Members of the Reichstag to posts in the Government—did these things mean a real advance towards responsible parliamentary government in Germany? That was the great question at the end of July. If they did, then it brought to the old Social Democrat Party a *kudos* of which it was sorely in need; it had really achieved something! In the circumstances, it is not surprising that the Majority was at first disposed to magnify what had been gained, to declare loudly that democracy was on the march in Germany. But in Germany, outside the ranks of the old Social Democrat Party, it was generally acknowledged that the crisis of July had led to nothing but illusory gains for the cause of democracy and peace. This was affirmed by the Radicals and Progressives with disconsolate resignation,[1] on the Right

[1] "We can sum up in one word all that has hitherto been carried through by the Reichstag for the internal renovation of the German Empire—Nothing. . . . A lick-spittle sham parliamentarism does not carry us forward to a system of regulated control and a new distribution of power; it only plunges us deeper into conditions in which everything is obscure and everything depends upon personal decisions and uncontrollable influence." (Theodor Wolff in the *Berliner Tageblatt,* July 23).

Wing with triumph,[1] by the Independents with sarcastic scorn.[2]

So long, however, as the leaders of the old Social Democrat Party could put the events of the crisis before the masses of the country in the light of a victory, they were able to check to some extent the slide towards the Independents. By the middle of July the local branches in sixty-two constituencies

[1] "We are bound for once to agree with the *Berliner Tageblatt* when it says that the appointing of two parliamentarians to offices in the Government has nothing to do with establishing parliamentary government. We hail the fact, not only because we do not think highly of parliamentary government, especially in a country like Germany, with its Party divisions, but chiefly because the new Chancellor has in this matter shown himself a man who indeed will not 'allow the conduct of affairs to be taken out of his hand'" (Bacmeister in *Das grössere Deutschland* for August 18).

[2] "Not that we expected from the new Chancellor anything different from what he actually offered in his speech to the assembled representatives of the Empire. . . . Not that we over-estimated our Scheidemann people, or expected from them tenacity of principle and other such qualities that they discarded long ago. Nevertheless such a degree of modesty, such readiness to deceive themselves and deceive others as they evinced yesterday, we, in spite of all our experiences during the last three years, could not have anticipated" (*Leipziger Volkszeitung,* July 20).

Herr H. Von Gerlach is not a Socialist, but his views largely coincide with those of the Independents. In his paper, *Die Welt am Montag,* he satirizes the old Social Democrat Party for being so easily satisfied with the crumbs thrown it by the Government. In the new appointments, whilst a Ministerial seat was given to the Centre, a Secretaryship and an Under-Secretaryship to the National Liberals, the Social Democrats, the Party which at the last elections had gained one-third of the German people, had been put off with one Under-Secretaryship! (Quoted in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* August 14.)

had gone over to the Independents, and in nineteen other constituencies vigorous Independent branches had been started as rivals to the branches of the old Party.[1] But after the crisis the number of secessions distinctly diminished, in spite of all the mordant satire which the Independents continued to let play upon the old Party's further identification with the German State.

Legien's anniversary speech.

One incident upon which the critics in Independent circles fastened was the speech delivered by Legien on August 4. On that day, the third anniversary of the crucial "Fourth of August," there was a patriotic gathering in the Reichstag. Amongst others Legien spoke. As a matter of fact, there does not appear to have been anything in his speech beyond what speakers of the Social Democrat Majority had said hundreds of times during the course of the war—the familiar declarations that the German working-class really did care for the Fatherland, that Germany was fighting to secure her economic future against those who wished to exclude her from the world-markets, that the German working-class earnestly desired peace, but that all overtures from the German side had been fruitless, because they were only regarded by the other side as signs of Germany's impending collapse, that Germany never could be defeated, that the responsibility for the continuance of the war rested on the other side, and so on. But to the Independents it was apparently a new fact that a representative of Social Democracy took part in a Nationalist demonstration at all. The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* described Legien's action as "a new departure from the traditional practice of the Party"; it put it on the same footing as the meeting of the

[1] *Leipziger Volkszeitung* for July 30.

Social Democrat leaders with the Emperor on July 20. But Legien and his friends, it said, had apostatized in heart long before the war.

There were two other causes besides the apparent success of the old Party which operated against the progress of the Minority. One was the discrediting of the Revolution in Russia by the further course of events—by the welter of visionary talk, the license and anarchy, the national weakness and humiliation, which followed it. All those in Germany who had been carried away by far-reaching hopes at the first outbreak of the Revolution, who had thought they saw the salvation of Germany near at hand by the effecting of a similar change of *régime* in that country, were embarrassed when it became possible for their opponents to point the finger at what had happened in Russia as an object-lesson. And the Majority organs did not fail to seize their advantage, to drive home the probable consequences to the German people, if anarchy of that kind were allowed to pervade German life and German army-organization. Unquestionably, events in Russia were calculated to make the German people shy of anything which tended to revolution, willing rather to bear the ills they had than fly to others that they knew not of.

The progress of the Independents hindered, but not stopped.

The other cause was the action of the German Government, which continuously suppressed and hampered the Independent propaganda whilst it gave comparatively free course to the polemics of the old Party against the Independents.

Yet, in spite of all, the Independents continued to gain some successes. In August, Dr. Erdmann, a member of the Antrick-Hoch section in the old Party, went over to the Independents. The strength of

their Group in the Reichstag was thereby increased to twenty-two.

At this time it was announced that the Borchardt section, the "International Socialists of Germany," had definitely organized themselves as a distinct party.

The complacency of the old Party at the result of the July crisis did not last long. It was soon obvious that the advocates of democracy in Germany could put no faith in the Government presided over by Michaelis. The discontent spread to the followers of Scheidemann. On August 21 *Vorwärts* compared the parliamentarians who had been given office in the Government to the "tame elephants" which are used in Indian elephant hunting to make the wild elephants captured in the palisade enclosure amenable to management.

Alienation between the old Party and the Michaelis regime. The Free Commission of Seven.

> In place of the parliamentary system we have got the system of parliamentary government-elephants, and with their help the Reichstag, which trumpeted angrily for new rights, is to be made tame and docile. What they seek to represent as a modest beginning of "parliamentarization" is, as a matter of fact, the exact opposite of the parliamentary system.

On the following day (August 22) Michaelis, in the morning session of the main Committee of the Reichstag, when challenged as to the interpretation put upon his speech of July 19 by the Pan-Germans, denied that he had ever accepted the peace resolution of the *bloc*. This threw the House into a ferment, and in the afternoon session the Chancellor denied his denial. After this, his credit with all Parties was irreparably gone. It was of no avail that on August 25 the Gov-

ernment announced another innovation which might seem a sop to the Parties crying out for parliamentary government. A "Free Commission," the Chancellor said, was to be instituted, consisting of seven Members of the Reichstag selected from different Parties—from the Centre (two), the Social Democrat Group (two), the Progressives (one), the National Liberals (one), the Conservatives (one), and of seven Members of the Federal Council (Bundesrat). This Commission was, as an experimental measure, to discuss with the Chancellor the answer to be given by the German Government to the Papal Note. It was intimated that if the experiment worked successfully with regard to this particular question, the Free Commission might become a permanent institution. The object of the Government was to bring about closer touch between the Government and the Reichstag.

By this time, however, even the old Social Democrat Party was critical of the Government's attempts to give the shadow of parliamentary government without the substance. According to the *Berliner Tageblatt,* indeed, the leaders of the Party in the Reichstag had signified in private conference to Michaelis beforehand their acceptance of the new Government proposal, which the bourgeois Progressive paper treats with ridicule.

> The Reichstag has let a present be pressed into its hand, which is *no more than an empty nut.* With this new institution Herr Michaelis has simply made another move on the chessboard which is to enable him to checkmate the Reichstag majority and to keep his own hands free.

But if the Social Democrat leaders had accepted the proposal, it was at any rate without enthusiasm. Dr. David, speaking for the Party in the Reichstag after

the Chancellor's announcement of the Free Commission, expressed the Party's attitude in the words: "We will co-operate in the new arrangement, but it does not in any way satisfy our claims." He had not been prepared, he said, to learn that the Bundesrat would be represented in the new Commission as well as the Reichstag. The only mode of government suitable for modern times was government by the people. Germany was the only country in which the old system still existed. The parliamentary system must come. There was a better way than that proposed by the Chancellor to secure the desirable closer touch between the Government and the Reichstag—real parliamentarization.

It was especially unfortunate that one point in connection with the new Commission was left confused. Were the seven members of the Reichstag on the Commission to act as representatives of their Parties? In his speech announcing the formation of the Commission, the Chancellor said, or seemed to say, No. They were there simply as individuals with political experience; the Commission would be completely free and independent of the Reichstag. It was not to be considered representative of the Parties from which the seven individuals were drawn. Dr. David in his speech expressed his astonishment at this declaration. Surely it was precisely the fact that they were representatives of their Parties which was the important fact, if the Commission was to promote co-operation between the Government and the representatives of the people? Dr. Michaelis made a second speech in which he said he had been misunderstood. It would certainly be the duty of the men who had a post on the Commission, as possessing the confidence of their several Parties, to conduct the

discussion in accordance with the wishes of their Parties. The leader of the Party would be sent to the Commission so that he might express the mind of his Party in doubtful cases. Obviously he would have to be in close touch with his Party in order that the Party generally might acquiesce in what had been done.

The two statements left everybody hopelessly mystified. The members of the Commission, Theodor Wolff wrote satirically that evening in the *Berliner Tageblatt,* were apparently to have their extra position somewhere between heaven and earth—perhaps on a rainbow!

The new Commission was treated with very little respect by *Vorwärts* the following day. The ambiguities and inconsistencies implied in it were dwelt upon. All real strength, the Social Democrat organ maintained, lay in the Reichstag, in the Parties represented there. It was only in so far as they had that strength behind them that the seven delegates counted for anything. Apart from that, the Commission was nothing at all. It was at best only a makeshift. "We may without contradiction wish it a prosperous activity—and a speedy end."

The Independents, of course, were contemptuous. The new Commission, Ledebour said in the House, was all a vain pretence (*Schaumschlägerei*). Its effect could only be to impair the prestige of the Reichstag. It would serve as an appendix to bureaucracy. In no case would his friends help to play at this political hocus-pocus.

As the weeks went by, the voice of the old Party, as heard in *Vorwärts,* evinces more and more impatience and discontent. It returns to the note of Scheidemann's utterances when he first came back

from Stockholm, before the problematic victory of July 19. This was in part due, no doubt, to the increased activity and clamour of the Jingoes and Conservatives. On September 9 the Manifesto of a new organization, the "Party of the Fatherland," was published, announcing a great popular campaign in favour of the Pan-German war-aims, of conquests and indemnities. The agitation was powerfully backed by persons in high place, found a certain support among the chiefs of the Army and Navy, and was soon shown to be far from a negligible force. All the circles in sympathy with the movement were, of course, bitterly opposed to the peace resolution of July 19, and—what was especially calculated to irritate the Social Democrat leaders—they continuously claimed Michaelis as their man, and represented his apparent acceptance of the peace resolution as an accommodation to a momentary expediency, which did not represent the real purpose of the Government.

Unrest in the old Party. President Wilson's answer to the Pope.

All this was not calculated to diminish the Social Democrat Party's suspicion of the Government and Chancellor. There also came the revelation in an American paper of the "Willy-Nicky" correspondence which *Vorwärts* first precipitately (September 6) declared to be a clumsy forgery. When the genuineness of the letters was admitted by the German Government, *Vorwärts* could only lay the blame upon Prince Bülow and his tortuous conduct of German foreign policy. But it made *Vorwärts* realize more acutely the urgency of a change in the German political system. It went so far as to say that it was no good talking about the moral wickedness of the enemy. "Hand on your heart, can you affirm that the conduct of the German State business has been absolutely

without blame?" The evil repute of the German Government for untrustworthiness was so far not deserved, it said, that there had been no *consciousness* of evil on the part of the German statesmen. But the system was at fault. "Germany is half-way between absolutism and parliamentarism. It must either go forward or backward. Who dares to suggest that it should go backward?. . ."

A certain divergence of view, it may be observed, begins to appear within the old Party between the more Nationalist and Imperialist section and the section represented by Scheidemann and *Vorwärts*. The reception given by *Vorwärts* on September 1 to President Wilson's Note was extremely remarkable. Whilst the German Press generally, even the other organs of the old Party, rose up in indignation at the idea of a foreign statesman interfering in German internal affairs, whilst the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* threw doubts upon the purity of a bourgeois statesman's motives, *Vorwärts* (September 1) was almost friendly. The Note, it said, showed foresight and skill. True, the Note omitted to say plainly that the United States would withstand any demands of the Entente Powers to diminish German territory or exact compensation.

Yet in one respect the Note is clear. It refuses to negotiate with Germany so long as the present system of government subsists. It demands pledges that the will of the German people be behind the German Government's will to treat. A certain part of the German Press is sure to assert that it would be unworthy of the German people to give such pledges. We think, on the contrary, that it would be unworthy of them to refuse. . . . Take the map of the world and look at one country after another! Everywhere else the real decision as to policy lies in the hands of those chosen by the people. . . . Why should it be otherwise with us?

. . . The Government of a country at war with us has a perfect right to demand that the people themselves shall undertake responsibility for the terms on which peace is concluded. It is simply obvious to Social Democracy that the Governments which conclude peace must embody the will of the peoples and must be upheld by their confidence. Still less will any one persuade us that the German people—one of the most capable and best-educated people in the world—could not support a form of government under which other nations have grown great. . . .

It must, of course, be remembered that *Vorwärts* gave this comparatively favourable reception to the President's Note only on the hypothesis that he, too, like the German Social Democrats, was working for a *status quo* peace. This was made clearer by an interview which Scheidemann gave a few days later to a representative of the United Press of America (reported September 9).

He gathered, he said, that the peace desired by the President and the peace desired by the Reichstag Majority were the same. Why, then, should America go on fighting? If it was only that Wilson wished the peace terms to be guaranteed by a German democracy, Scheidemann thought that was quite reasonable; he only deprecated the gratuitously insulting form in which the desire was expressed. But to attain the democratization of Germany further bloodshed was unnecessary. The Reichstag already had the work well in hand, and President Wilson might be sure that the work would go forward still more expeditiously, if Germany could get peace.

True, there was nothing in these utterances to show that Scheidemann and his followers had weakened on any of the points which distinguished them from the Independents—the insistence upon Germany's retention of what she possessed in 1914, the readiness to

vote supplies for the continuation of the war—yet it showed that for the moment they were putting the main stress upon that which they had in common with the Independents—the craving for democratic reform. It showed that this craving was strong enough to overcome the Nationalist *amour propre* which was wounded by Wilson's plain speaking. It indicated a certain tendency in the Scheidemann wing of the old Party to draw nearer to the Independents.

Heilmann's article against parliamentary government.

This meant some possibility of a fissure between the Scheidemann wing and the other, the Imperialist-Nationalist, wing of the Party. Already, on August 26, the *Glocke* (the organ, as we have seen, of which "Parvus" is founder and Conrad Haenisch editor) published an article by Ernst Heilmann, editor of the *Internationale Korrespondenz*[1] which was an attack on the whole principle of parliamentary government. German Socialists, he said, all wanted the democratization of the bureaucratic machinery, but that did not mean parliamentary government. Far from it! Heilmann drew a repellent picture of the parliamentary *régime* as seen in the Western democracies. It was only the inveterate German subserviency towards everything foreign which made many German Socialists go on worshipping England and France as countries of freedom and repeating the dictum of the old Liebknecht that England was "two hundred

[1] He had attained some notoriety earlier in the war by an article from his pen in the *Chemnitzer Volkstimme,* published when he went to the front on active service. The article had concluded "I go to Hindenburg!" He had returned to his journalistic activities at home, after having been wounded.

years ahead of Germany." Heilmann's ideal was an administration by expert officials, not by persons popularly elected. Reform of the Prussian franchise, yes, for that would tend to the democratization of the administrative machine from below upwards, but parliamentarization—never!

This article was a bombshell in Social Democrat circles. Even the bulk of the Right Wing of the Party were startled and scandalized by it. A man as far to the Right as Kolb of Karlsruhe gave emphatic expression to his disapproval. Between *Vorwärts* and the *Internationale Korrespondenz* war broke out on another score. Heilmann accused *Vorwärts* of being the only Social Democrat paper which had taken sides with Wilson, after his Note. Stampfer, the present political editor of *Vorwärts*, called this a "police denunciation." Heilmann replied that even had it continued to be a Minority paper, *Vorwärts* would hardly have sunk so low as it had done under Stampfer, with his constant enthusiasm for Kerensky and Wilson.

Lensch explains a "peace by understanding."

If on the question of parliamentarization there was this tendency in certain individuals on the Right of the Party to break away, on the peace question, too, it was made manifest that the attitude of the Right differed from that of the main body. This might be concealed by the fact that all alike were for a "peace by understanding," for a *status quo* peace; but an article contributed by Lensch to the *Glocke* showed that behind this formula it was possible for a temper as Jingo and ambitious as that of the Pan-Germans to find cover. Lensch explained frankly that a *status quo* peace was desirable only because it would mean a complete triumph for Germany in the war, that by

securing a *status quo* peace now Germany would be much better able to secure later on what the Pan-Germans wanted than by prolonging the war now, in the hope of securing it all at once, as the Pan-Germans mistakenly urged. For England, France, and Italy, Lensch declared, with a staggering lack of caution, a "peace by understanding" would necessarily spell the beginning of their downfall. The difference between the Pan-Germans and such Socialists as Paul Lensch was discovered to be only on the question of procedure, not on that of ends.

The German Government's answer to the Pope.

On September 22 the reply of the German Government to the Pope's Note was published in Germany. It was the issue of a tug of war behind the scenes between the Pan-Germans and the supporters of the Reichstag peace resolution. On the whole, the supporters of the peace resolution had the best of it; the reply intimated the German Government's acceptance of that resolution and of the basis laid down by the Pope. Yet the Pan-Germans had succeeded in getting all specific mention of Belgium kept out of the reply, and since it was already plain that the Reichstag resolution was construed by many of its supporters in a sense which did not exclude annexations, the fact that the German reply accepted it had somewhat questionable value. *Vorwärts* greeted the reply with a tempered approval in which there was the usual element of self-congratulation. The reply did not "satisfy all its wishes," but the Social Democrats of the old Party were apparently disposed to take credit for the fact that the German Government, in consequence of their continued pressure, had really moved a certain way towards a "peace by understanding."

The *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (September 25) essayed to puncture the old Party's self-gratulation. If Bethmann Hollweg, it said, had moved in the direction of peace, that was not due to pressure from the Government Socialists. It was due to the pressure of military events. The policy of the German Government was to get whatever it could; only it realized the possibilities more truly than the Pan-Germans, and simply modified its attitude as the course of the war showed that the Pan-German aims were unattainable. And now Michaelis was following the same line—as he was bound to do. He, too, wanted to keep his hands free and adjust his policy to events. The Pan-Germans had come to dislike him, because he wanted no more than it was possible to get. But the German answer to the Papal Note showed that the destiny of the German people was still determined by Crown Councils, upon which the people exerted no sort of influence. "Such are the prospects opened to the German people by the attitude of the German Government, which the *Dependent* Socialists proudly register as a success for their policy. Wondrous prospects!"

Franz Mehring, in an article he contributed to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (September 26) was, of course, even more scathing. At best, he said, the old Party might have claimed a victory, if the German Government had given a clear, express answer to the Belgian question.

The restoration of Belgium is, as every child in Europe knows, the first and most important preliminary condition for peace. Only when this, and other demands which form the actual basis of a lasting peace, are completely secured can there be any talk at all about international arbitration or general disarmament. When, therefore, the German reply ex-

patiates on the general demands of the Papal Note, but passes over the restoration of Belgium with an eloquent silence, it simply says in effect, "We are quite ready to co-operate in constructing the roof, but we will have nothing to do with building the walls." In other words: The militarist spirit has no thought yet of abdicating: all it does is to take on a *protective mask.* But is not the fact that militarism is compelled to take on a mask in itself some concession to the exigencies of the time? It is; to that extent the German reply does mark a certain progress.

But the progress, Mehring goes on, is at so slow a pace, that at this rate European civilization may well have been destroyed by the time the German Government has reached the point of making real concessions. If the men of the old Party are as powerful as they pretended, Mehring concluded, let them have the State of Siege removed and the little measure of free speech which existed in Germany before August 1914 restored.

Count Czernin's speech.

In the gloom of their disappointment at the German Chancellor's attitude, the German Social Democrats of the old Party saw, or thought they saw, a ray of light in the speech made beyond the frontier by the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Czernin, on October 2, at Buda-Pest. In this speech Count Czernin declared that the Austro-Hungarian Government desired to see Europe after the war established on a new international basis of justice. This was to be attained by international disarmament and the recognition of arbitration. At the conclusion of his speech Count Czernin said:—

But let no one cherish the delusion that this pacific moderate programme of ours can or will hold good for ever. If our enemies compel us to continue the war, we shall be obliged

to revise our programme and demand compensation. . . . I am absolutely convinced that our position in another year will be incomparably better than to-day. . . . If our enemies will not listen and compel us to continue this bloodshed, then we reserve to ourselves the right to revise our programme and reserve freedom as to our terms.

All Count Czernin's offers, that is, tied Austria-Hungary to nothing at all, except in the event of the enemies' instantly accepting them—a contingency of which there was little probability.

In their natural desire to hail one utterance at any rate of a responsible statesman in the German alliance which adopted elements from the old Socialist programme, some German Social Democrats were willing to overlook the sinister conclusion of Count Czernin's speech (So the *Münchener Post*). *Vorwärts* was now harder to satisfy and noted the conclusion with disapproval. The Independents saw little to choose between Czernin and Michaelis. It was a bad speech, said the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. Even if the speech, without the conclusion, would have been good, the conclusion stamped its character upon the whole.

The concluding sentences are just those upon which the Pan-German papers lay stress. It would be idle to pretend that they serve the cause of peace. . . . The English Press said that Michaelis had banged the door against peace. Czernin has bolted it.

XIX

THE CRISIS OF OCTOBER 1917

THE old Party wanted to show that it was not going to remain indefinitely passive in view of the new active and exuberant propaganda of the Pan-Germans. On October 6, Landsberg brought forward in the Reichstag, in the name of his Party, an interpellation on the Pan-German propaganda carried on in the army with the encouragement of persons in authority. He adduced an impressive body of facts which showed the great extent of the propaganda and the complicity of the Higher Command. Stein, the Prussian Minister for War, replied. He admitted that individual officers might have been over-zealous, but he pretended that Landsberg had greatly exaggerated the extent of partisan propaganda. Besides, if there was some injudicious Pan-German propaganda, there were "other things too" going about. And he flung forward a pamphlet against the war as an instance of what he meant, hoping, no doubt, to discredit the Party as a whole by means of the anti-Government propaganda carried on out of sight by Independents and Extremists. (A Socialist: "The Minister for War is playing a dirty game!") The impression made upon the Parties of the *bloc* by Stein's prevarications was not favourable. Their dissatisfaction was changed into positive anger by a rude speech from Helfferich, now Vice-Chancellor, who followed Stein. The anger

The Social Democrat interpellation.

of the parliamentary *bloc* included Michaelis in its scope, because he had failed to make his appearance in person.

The debate on the Supplementary Estimates.

On the morning of October 8 the debate on the Socialists' interpellation would normally have been resumed as the first thing in the order of business. But the angry Reichstag majority had meantime determined to show their want of confidence in the Government by moving, before anything else was done, that the Supplementary Estimates agreed upon in Committee (for Helfferich's salary as Vice-Chancellor, amongst other things) should be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration, until it could be shown that no part of them was to be used to further Pan-German propaganda. They carried, with the additional support of the Independent Group to the Left and of the National Liberals to the Right, but against the votes of the Conservatives, the first motion that the question of the Supplementary Estimates should be put before the House before the debate on the Socialist interpellation was resumed. When, however, the motion that the Supplementary Estimates should be referred back to the Committee was put, both the Conservatives and the Independents voted against it. Now as before, though they voted in the same way, it was for opposite reasons—the Conservatives because they held that no further consideration was necessary in order to pass the Estimates, the Independents because they held that no further consideration was necessary in order to refuse them. In spite of the opposition of the two extremes, the majority *bloc,* still supported in this business by the National Liberals, was, of course, numerous enough to secure that the motion to refer back the Estimates passed.

Accordingly, in the afternoon of October 8, the House went again into Committee to reconsider the Estimates. This time the Chancellor came to the House in person and tried to remove the offence of his absence on the 6th by mollifying explanations. Helfferich also tried to undo the unfortunate effect of his speech of two days before by a statement which was a half-apology. When the question was finally put, it was shown that the Chancellor and Helfferich had had sufficient persuasiveness to induce the Centre and the Progressives to vote the estimates together with the Parties on the Right. But the Social Democrat Group was not to be placated. It voted against the Estimates alongside of the Independents. For the moment the Government's action had had the effect of breaking up the parliamentary *bloc* of July and throwing the two divided Socialist Groups once more together.

The mutiny debate.

On the following day (October 9), the question of the Estimates having been disposed of, the debate on the Socialist interpellation was resumed. Dittmann, of the Independent Group, spoke first. He brought forward further evidence to prove the extent of the Pan-German propaganda in the Army, to show that it was carried on not only by subordinates, but by the high commanders, and that it was connived at by the Government. Then he raised another matter calculated to excite controversial passion. He alluded to the Socialist propaganda in the Army and Navy.[1] He complained that the Government, while it gave every facility to the

[1] It is important to notice that the question of the Socialist propaganda in the Navy and the Government measures of suppression was apparently first brought up in this debate by a Socialist speaker.

Pan-German propaganda, laid its hand heavily and ruthlessly upon the Socialist propaganda.

Sentences of many years' imprisonment with penal servitude are given merely for Socialist opinions, merely because of attempts to gain members for the Independent Socialists. I ask the Chancellor whether it is true that nearly 200 years of penal servitude have been given, yes, and sentences of death—whether men have been shot because they held Socialist opinions?

The Chancellor answered this challenge in a speech so indiscreet that the German telegraph agencies had to be prevented from transmitting it abroad till it had been carefully doctored. According to what has been published, the Chancellor explained that his former assurance as to his treating all Parties and tendencies with complete impartiality, applied only to such Parties as did not "pursue aims which endanger the existence of the German Empire and Federal States"—not therefore, presumably, to the Independent Socialists. He also went over the same ground as General Von Stein on October 6, explaining and defending the work of "enlightenment" (*Aufklärung*) carried on in the Army—on simply patriotic lines, the Chancellor said, not on party lines. In the unpublished part of his speech he seems to have said things about the trouble in the Navy which it was not deemed expedient that the outside world should overhear.

Then Admiral von Capelle, the Secretary of State for the Imperial Navy, spoke. He declared that revolutionary ideas had been disseminated in the Navy with the object of crippling the fleet and enforcing peace. He roundly accused the Independents of being behind this propaganda. There was documentary

proof, he said, that the chief agitator had had an interview with Dittmann, Haase, and Vogtherr in the Reichstag building and that the three Socialist leaders had given their approval to his designs, and promised to supply him with seditious literature; they had only advised the greatest caution. He had thought it his duty to give orders that the circulation of such literature should be stopped. As to subsequent events in the fleet, all he need say was that a few unprincipled and disloyal persons, who had committed a grave offence, had met with the fate they deserved, but the current rumours were gross exaggerations.

All the Socialists in the House were by now in a state of extreme excitement and indignation. Even the members of the old Party did not believe that Haase, Dittmann, and Vogtherr had ever given their countenance to mutiny. They considered that Capelle's accusations were outrageous. The other Parties of the parliamentary *bloc* held that the Government had no right to make such charges except before a tribunal which could pass a judicial verdict on the evidence. David spoke first and protested against the Chancellor's declaration that the Independent Socialists were to be treated as outside the pale. Exceptional laws had not been found to work out happily in the past. The rest of his speech was a vigorous attack upon the Fatherland Party. Then the three Independent Socialists accused by Capelle spoke. First Haase. It was true, he said, he had an interview with the sailor in question. But it was not true that the sailor had submitted any such plan as Capelle had described, any plan for crippling the German fleet. Soldiers and sailors were continually visiting him and telling him their grievances, espe-

cially complaints of illegal treatment. Like other Members of the Reichstag, he usually saw such visitors in the Party Room in the Reichstag building.

In the summer of this year the sailor in question came to see me and complained bitterly. He spoke of the great discontent among the sailors and their utter lack of any mental food, for which they made up to some extent by subscribing to the Independent Socialist Press. Their plan, he said, was to continue their education, and when they got ashore, to hold political discussions. I then observed to him that there was nothing unlawful in this in itself, but in the particular circumstances in which he was placed, he should exercise the greatest caution. . . . He made upon me the impression of a fresh young man with high thoughts, and I was profoundly shaken when I heard that he had had to suffer death for having followed his political ideals.

As to the Chancellor's declaration that he did not extend equal treatment to the Independents, Haase said he had expected it.

"From the very first day of the war I expected it, and on August 4, immediately before the decisive sitting, I predicted that such a declaration would come. But the Chancellor only shows that the water is already above the gunwales of the Government ship. In such a moment, when they see no issue from all the misery of the war, they fly out against the men who fought the policy of the Government from the outset and prophesied that it would end in disaster. The tones of the Chancellor are not new to us. We have known them since the days of Puttkamer of blessed memory; and just as he—and a greater than he, Bismarck—came to shipwreck with their policy, so, Herr Chancellor Doktor Michaelis, it will not be long before you see this policy smashed to pieces and the ideas for which we fight supported by an ever-increasing multitude, not in Germany only, but in all countries inhabited by civilized man."

Vogtherr also stated that he had known the sailor who had been put to death, and discussed with him

conditions in the Navy. Every man in the services had a right to tell his grievances to a Member of the Reichstag, and the Member was bound to listen. But there was nothing in the literature circulated by the Independents which would be evidence of a plan to cripple the fleet. "Show us," he cried, "a single letter, a single sentence out of any writing, which has reference to any such thing. Any one can get our literature." The Chancellor tried to injure the Independents by casual insinuations. His policy must lead to bankruptcy. Dittmann spoke in a similar sense. He had given advice to a large number of soldiers and sailors with grievances, but had always cautioned them against allowing their discontent to run away with them. The persecution was directed against all Socialists indiscriminately, including those of the Majority.

Capelle now tried to substantiate his charges. He read out the statements of a sailor taken down at the trial. This made it appear that the three Independents accused had been privy to the plans of Reichnitz, the sailor put to death. The evidence was not such as would have had much weight in a court of law without further examination.

After the speaker for the Centre had deprecated the sweeping charge brought against the Independents by the Chancellor and Capelle, and said that if the Government had evidence against the three Members, they should be proceeded against in the proper legal way, and the speaker for the Conservatives had delivered a defence of the Pan-German policy, Ebert spoke for the old Social Democrat Party. He protested strongly against the irregular way in which the Government had flung out these accusations. There was nothing incriminating in the fact that soldiers

and sailors had made their grievances privately known to Socialist Members of the Reichstag. It was happening every day. The Independents had as much right as any other Party to disseminate their views. If the Government connived at the Pan-German propaganda, it could not complain of the Independent propaganda. As to the Chancellor's putting the Independents outside the pale, Ebert endorsed David's words that this was based on the old conception of exceptional legislation, which the Social Democrats emphatically condemned. If the Government really meant to adopt such policy, Ebert declared war upon it in the name of the Party of which he was the leader.

Stresemann, the National Liberal speaker, followed, arguing, like the Centre speaker, that if there was real evidence against the three Members, proper legal proceedings should be taken, and then Friedrich Naumann, the Progressive politician and writer, of *Mitteleuropa* fame, spoke for his Party. He, too, condemned the action of the Government in trying to make political capital out of alleged misconduct on the part of certain individual Members of the Reichstag, when the Crown Prosecutor would certainly have taken action against them, had the evidence against them existed. To outlaw a whole Party, as Michaelis had done, was to go back to the worst practices before 1914. Naumann devoted the rest of his speech to demonstrating the harm done to the German cause by the Fatherland Party and the political activities of Admiral Tirpitz.

The Chancellor then spoke again in reply to the complaints against his former speech. He tried to justify the punishments inflicted upon sailors found with cards which pledged them to recognize the

principles of the Independents and to carry on a work of propaganda in the Navy. He denied that he had ever proposed to "outlaw" the Independent Socialist Party; he had only said that it was justifiable to take measures against a Party which could not have the same liberty for spreading its opinions conceded to it as was conceded to other Parties.

Haase stood up again to join issue with him. He once more emphasized the point that if there had been any ground for legal proceedings against himself and his two friends the Crown Prosecutor would certainly have acted.

"It was a grave injustice to the accused men that we were not called as witnesses. Had we been called, these unfortunate men would have been saved from death." (A Majority Socialist here interjected: "Judicial murder!") "Their parents were never officially informed that the death sentence had been passed on their sons. The first they heard of it was from a man on furlough."

The Chancellor answered that the men had been condemned by an independent court and that it rested with the court to decide who should be called as witnesses. He adhered to the statement that the confessions of the condemned implicated the three Independent leaders, in so far as they received from them propaganda literature for distribution.

Dittmann replied. The fact that persons received propaganda literature from him, he said, even if true (he did not, as a matter of fact, remember giving any such literature to this particular man), did not constitute any offence. It would have been nothing out of the common. He remembered that the man had mentioned he read Independent newspapers. And Dittmann had warned him to bear in mind that the

political impartiality which some official quarters honestly tried to observe was not found in the Navy or the Army. "By the working-classes this poor sailor will be accounted a martyr. His sentence will live in the annals of this war as an utterly despicable judicial murder."

When the resolution of no confidence in the Government was put at the close of this agitating debate, the voting was the same as the day before. Tho two Socialist Groups—the old Party Group and the Independents—voted together for it. The non-Socialist Parties of the Majority *bloc,* although they had shown in the debate their agreement with the Socialists in condemning the Government's action, were not prepared to go as far as to vote no confidence. They voted against the resolution with the Conservatives and the National Liberals.

Kühlmann on foreign policy.

On the same day a debate on the foreign policy of the Empire, in relation to the peace resolution of July, was begun in the Reichstag, and on the following day was concluded. This debate was signalized by a speech from Kühlmann, the new Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in which he asserted that the question of Belgium no longer offered an insuperable obstacle, that the question of Alsace-Lorraine alone now blocked the way, and that the Germans would never—"no, never!"—consent to any concession in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine. Since, however, the debate did not make any change in the position of either Social Democrat Party, it need not be examined at length here. Gradnauer, speaking for the old Party, hailed Kühlmann's speech with warm approval, as containing that clear acceptance of "no annexations" which had been wanting in the confused utterances of

Michaelis. Ledebour, speaking for the Independents, said that the Chancellor's recent declaration had not made the attitude of the Government any clearer. His explanations had evacuated the peace resolution of any meaning. He had said in the Budget Committee that he would not tie his hands as to Belgium. Kühlmann's speech, perhaps, showed that if he personally had the conduct of negotiations, he would not make difficulties about giving up Belgium. But not all those included in the parliamentary *bloc* had really renounced annexations. Finally, Ledebour spoke of the Luxburg affair, complaining that Kühlmann had treated it too airily—"the suggestion of Luxburg that ships should be sunk without a trace was the most infamous thing that he had ever read in any State document"—and of the German conduct in the Baltic provinces, where a German minority, which composed less than 10 per cent. of the population, had been placed in a position of dominance.

In the debates of the following days, the concluding days of the autumn session (October 10 and 11), the two Socialist Groups continued to vote together. They alone voted against the amendment, proposed by a Centre Member, regarding the Government subsidies to be paid to shipbuilders in order that Germany's losses in mercantile shipping might be repaired as expeditiously as possible—an amendment carried by the votes of all the other Parties. They alone voted against the Supplementary Estimates on their third reading, to show their unmitigated hostility to Helfferich. They alone voted for the resolution, proposed by an Independent, that all "enlightenment" of men in the Army and Navy by the Government should be stopped.

In two of the debates the extreme irritation of the old Party against the Government at this juncture was made manifest. When General Gröner had presided over the War Department, which administered the Auxiliary Service Law, the relations between the Majority Socialists and the War Office, in the working of the Auxiliary Service Law, had been remarkably friendly. As we saw, there was at one time even a tendency in Majority Socialist circles to exalt the military authorities above the civil. But General Gröner had been removed under the Michaelis *régime* at the end of August, because he offended the magnates of the iron industry by his protection of the workers' interests; this, indeed, had been among the causes which made the Michaelis *régime* an abomination to the Socialists of the old Party. On October 10 a Majority Socialist of the section nearest to the Independents, Schmidt of Meissen, introduced the interpellation, which stood in the name of Antrick, on the prevention of workers' meetings and combination by the Army Command. His speech showed that, if the Independent Socialists were persecuted and hampered by the Government, the old Party as well had now a good deal to complain of. The favour shown to it, as against the Independents, was merely the negative one of a less severe, as against a more severe, repression. Even the Trade Unions were prevented from canvassing for new members. Socialist speakers were forbidden to discuss war-aims in public, and any meeting, according to the orders issued in one military district, might be broken up if it was considered to be prejudicial to the unity of the German people. In Posen the order to break up a meeting might not be challenged. In the Breslau command in June,

The debate on the prevention of workers' meetings.

even a fly-sheet which the Trade Unions wished to circulate discountenancing a "wild strike" was prohibited by the General in Command. When the strike broke out, the Unions were forbidden to address the strikers directly, although it was thanks to their offices that an early agreement between the strikers and the Government was ultimately reached. At Cattowitz, when there was a meeting of the Miners' Union, a gendarme stood at the door to see that none but members entered. The Polish Unions in Upper Silesia were forbidden to discuss the Auxiliary Service Law or their own situation, and in the same region it was forbidden to read a report of the activity of the Party Group in the Reichstag at a closed meeting of members of the party. And so on. The promises given by the Government, when the Auxiliary Service Law was introduced, had been broken. The social insight, the speaker cried, which at one time had marked the War Department had disappeared.

The Censorship debate.

In the debate on the Censorship the Socialist protest was supported by the Progressive speaker, Müller of Meiningen. Heine, who spoke for the old Party, did so in terms of hot indignation—"hateful always to receive and forward the same old complaints"—"sheer tyranny," and always "these same eternal gracious declarations," on the part of the Government, which no longer won credit with anybody. Papers were allowed every licence to rail at the Reichstag Majority, whilst public utterance on the other side, in the Press or on the platform, was continually gagged. Heine referred to the prohibition of Maximilian Harden's *Zukunft,* of the Munich paper *Das Forum,* and of a recently published book by F. W. Foerster. In the course of his speech, he spoke of an utterance of Hindenburg's,

placarded up that very day, in which people were exhorted to fight against the handful of weaklings and cowards. Everybody would understand that this meant the supporters of a *status quo* peace. Heine expressed the hope that Hindenburg would keep himself to the business in which he had won such glory—fighting—and not meddle in politics and chatter.

The coupling of the term "chatter" (*schwatzen*) with Hindenburg's name, even though a negative intervened, shocked German ears as a profanity. The President of the House called the speaker to order, and Heine, in consideration of these sensibilities, tendered the word "talk" (*sprechen*) as a substitute.

At the conclusion of the debate on the Censorship, the Reichstag adjourned till December 5.

XX

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES

WHILST, in the Reichstag, the Social Democrat Group of the old Party had been taking a high tone towards the Government and had been impelled by Michaelis' policy to co-operate with the Independents, in the country the struggle between the two Parties was going on and the statistics of the old Party, published in September, were far from cheerful.

Statistics.

These statistics had been made up at the end of March 1917, and did not, therefore, show any losses the old Party had sustained since the constitution of the Independent Socialist Party. Of its male members some 75 per cent. had at that date been called up for active service. But the number of women-members also showed a disconcerting fall. It is suggested by the Directorate in their report that this was partly due to the wives of soldiers, who had been excused their contributions, having drifted away from the organization. The total number of inscribed members of the Party had been in the last few years as follows:

	Men.	Women.	Total.
On March 31, 1914	911,151	174,754	1,085,905
On March 31, 1915	451,235	134,663	585,898
On March 31, 1916	320,200	112,418	432,618
On March 31, 1917	176,453	66,608	243,061

Or, take the figures for different constituencies on March 31, 1916, and March 31, 1917:—

	1916.	1917.
East Prussia	3,906	553
Greater Berlin	76,355	6,475
Erfurt	2,312	480
Hesse-Nassau	10,531	3,088
Lower Rhine	18,788	2,524
Leipzig	19,522	428
Great Thuringia	12,107	4,760

There was a similar fall in the numbers of juvenile associates. At the outbreak of the war there had been in Germany 837 Junior Committees; by April 1, 1915, the number had decreased to 500, a year later to about 400, and by April 1, 1917, to 300. The number of subscribers to the juvenile Socialist paper, *Arbeiter Jugend,* had been 67,062 on April 1, 1915; on April 1, 1917, it was only 36,511.

The Party Press generally had been badly hit. The number of Social Democrat papers had decreased from 91 on March 31, 1914, to 80 on March 31, 1917. The number of subscribers of the daily Social Democrat papers showed a much greater decrease:—

On March 31, 1914	1,488,345	subscribers
On March 31, 1915	1,060,891	"
On March 31, 1916	900,731	"
On March 31, 1917	762,757	"

While no doubt the calling up of men for active service accounted for a good deal of this decrease, it did not account for all of it. It did not, for instance, account for the signal fall in the number of women and junior members. Also, if the calling up of men might naturally have made a great difference at the beginning of the war, this cause would not explain

so startling a fall in the membership during the third year of the war. This is confirmed if we compare the figures of the Trade Unions, which were affected no less than the Social Democrat Party by the calling up of their members, and which did not show anything like a corresponding fall. The membership of the Trade Unions had, indeed, declined conspicuously during the earlier part of the war, but during the recent period there had been a notable upward tendency.

"At the outbreak of war the Trade Unions counted 2,482,046 members, including 214,017 women. The total membership at first sank steadily, which was hardly surprising in the case of the men, so long as men were being called up for military service. At the end of the fourth quarter of 1916 the numbers were reduced as low as to 934,784 members, including 197,008 women. From that time, however, a gratifying recovery may be traced. From the third quarter of 1916 to the third quarter of 1917 the numbers rose from 947,564 to 1,201,770. This is equivalent to an increase of 254,206, or 26.8 per cent. The increase was greatest among the women-members, in consequence of the war-industries. Their numbers rose from 185,496 to 364,391—an increase of 118,895, or 64.1 per cent. In the case of men-members the increase was naturally smaller—135,311 members, equivalent to 17.7 per cent. Even so, the addition of 135,311 members implies, in view of the fact that men were being continually drawn away from war-industries, a recovery of the Trade Unions. What is still more gratifying is that their upward curve has been maintained. The Miners' Federation at the end of the fourth quarter of 1916 numbered 53,404 members, on September 30th, 1917, 96,089. The figures for the Builders at the former date were 72,948, on October

15, 1917, 82,578. In the case of the workers in factories, there are at present, including those called up, 5,714 more members organized in Trade Unions than before the war; in the case of the employés of communes and municipalities, the figure is 30,477 as against 25,390; in the case of the Textile Workers, roughly 70,000 as against 56,747."[1]

It is certain that a large part of the decrease in the numbers of the old Party is due to Comrades passing to the camps of Haase, of Liebknecht, or of Mehring. The figures for the Party given above were made up, as has been pointed out, up to March 1, 1917, before the Minority had organized itself as a separate Party; even before that date, therefore, the Minority propaganda had been as effective as this, in spite of Censorship and Government suppression. The fact that *Gleichheit*, under Clara Zetkin, championed the views of Haase had been of great advantage to the Minority in extending its influence amongst women. If one may accept the statement of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* (September 15, 1917), the numbers of the old Party had decreased since March from 243,061 to 150,000, whereas the numbers of the paying members of the Independent Party now amounted to 120,000. About the beginning of October the important constituency of Hof in Northern Bavaria, which country had hitherto been solid for the old Party, went over to the Independents. In Würtemberg about the same time, Hornung, the Member for Böckingen in the Würtemberg Landtag, left the old Party for the new, accompanied by a good part of his constituency.

At the end of September the Directorate of the old Party carried out with a high hand the ejection of

[1] Hermann Müller in *Die Neue Zeit* for January 18, 1918, p. 364.

Kautsky from the editorial office of *Die Neue Zeit.* Legally the paper belonged to the Party, and the Directorate had obviously some justification, in these circumstances, for insisting that the paper should not be run in the interests of another Party by some one who was doing all he could to thwart the old Party's policy. On the other hand, Kautsky's past connexion with the paper, which largely owed its influence to his zeal and ability, seemed to give him a *moral* claim to be left in possession. He complained, through the columns of the *Leipziger Volkszeitung,* that he had been given no notice. He was actually preparing the number which should appear on October 5 when the representatives of the Directorate of the old Party walked into the office, told him that he and Wurm, his assistant, were dismissed, and installed Heinrich Cunow in his place. On October 5 the first number of a new *Jahrgang* of *Die Neue Zeit* appeared as usual, similar in form and type to *Die Neue Zeit* of old, but in character a new paper.

The case of *Die Neue Zeit.*

However justified the leaders of the old Party may have been in refusing to allow a paper belonging to the Party to be conducted in opposition to the Party, their manner of action was singularly graceless. That this is not only the judgment of an outsider is shown by the fact that the action caused shame even within the ranks of the old Party. Carl Severing, one of the contributors to the Imperialist-Socialist *Sozialistische Monatshefte,* wrote about it in the number for October 10, as follows:—

The Party Directorate could certainly no longer bear the responsibility for allowing the Party funds to be spent in combating the Party. Whether the measures they took were the right ones is another question. It would surely have been

enough to withdraw the financial and moral support of the old Party from the paper which Kautsky had converted into the weekly organ of the Independent Social Democrat Party, and have left Kautsky to continue editing it. *Die Neue Zeit* was not, it must be remembered, an official organ of the Party from the outset. It was originally a private concern and might have become such again. Formerly it was described in its sub-title as "A Review of Public and Intellectual Life." It was not till 1901 that it was changed into "Weekly Organ of German Social Democracy"—a quite needless, and not altogether happy, change of garb. Intellectual life is not something which can be put under rules. And the sub-title, which was intended to act as a protection to the official views of the Party, has served in these last years (life's ironies!) actually as a means of discrediting them. All this ought not to prevent one from recognizing that, as a matter of fact, Kautsky had acquired a moral right (*ein geistiges Anrecht*) to remain in possession of the periodical, which he had conducted for an uninterrupted space of thirty-five years, and which had no doubt become a part of his spiritual self. . . . The Party had all the less reason to incur the odium of having perpetrated an act of violence in that the existence of an official weekly organ was in no way a necessity for it.

Fall of Michaelis.

The breach between the Social Democrat Party and Michaelis was now complete. Ebert had declared war on him; the Party Press was asserting emphatically that he had made himself "impossible" and must go. The hostility of the Social Democrats alone would not have been enough to overthrow him, but by now his incapacity for the office of Chancellor at such a moment, his self-contradictions and maladdress, had become pitifully obvious to everybody. Even the Conservatives and Pan-Germans, who claimed, probably with truth, that he was in heart on their side, could hardly be satisfied with such a champion. On October 28 the Emperor accepted his resignation and offered the Chancellorship to the Roman Catholic ex-Professor Count Hertling.

XXI

THE TRADE UNION CONFERENCE AT BERNE

BEFORE that event, however, two gatherings had taken place, not without some importance in the history of German Social Democracy—the International Trade Union Congress at Berne and the Social Democrat *Parteitag* at Würzburg.

Previous attempts to hold a Conference.

In the Trade Union Conference, of course, Social Democracy was only indirectly concerned. Yet since the German Trade Union leaders were also leaders in the Social Democrat Party, and the relations between the "free" Trade Unions and the Party were, as has been shown, very close, the Conference which was assembled at Berne from October 1 to October 4 cannot be passed over without notice in this survey. It was the result of efforts on the part of the German Trade Union leaders, which had been going on since the beginning of the war, to bring about a meeting with the Trade Union leaders of other countries, including the enemy countries. As early as August 25, 1914, Legien, as President of the International Federation of Trade Unions, which had its central office in Berlin, had asked the Trade Union Federations of neutral countries to take steps to maintain the international connection, and, in consequence of this request, a subor-

dinate office had been established in Amsterdam. Early in 1915 the Trade Union Federations of Great Britain, France, and America had united in the demand that the central office should be removed from Berlin to a neutral country. This gave an opportunity to the German Trade Union leaders to press for an International Conference, since they maintained that, while they had no objection on principle to the removal of the central bureau, they could consent to it only if it were done on the authority of an International Conference. From that time the project of the Conference was kept continuously alive by the efforts of the Germans. Such a Conference, they said, would not have to discuss any of the political questions connected with the war or the coming peace, but only the international adjustment of strictly industrial questions in which the working-class everywhere had a common interest, and it would have to see that these matters were safeguarded in the peace-terms. After the Conference had been several times fixed for a particular date, and postponed, and the attempt to hold it in the summer of 1917 at Stockholm in connexion with the Socialist Stockholm Conference had, as we have seen, also failed, the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions ultimately summoned the Conference for October 1 in Berne.

The Berne meeting.

In the event no representatives came to it from any country at war with the Central Powers. The British, Belgian, and American Trade Unions declined to meet the Germans—the British for the reason, frankly stated, that Germany was still holding by military force territory not belonging to her and was carrying on war by atrocious methods. The French and Italian Trade Unionists were refused passports by their

respective Governments. Of the 62 delegates who attended, 32 came from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria, 11 were Swiss, and the remaining 19 from the Scandinavian countries and Holland.[1]

Legien himself was amongst the German delegates. The meeting spent a good part of its time in discussing such questions as freedom of migration, right of coalition, social insurance, fixing of hours of labour, hygiene, protection against accidents, home-labour, protection of children, protection of female workers, legislation with regard to seamen. In the absence, however, of delegates from any of the enemy Powers, it was obvious that the resolutions of the Conference on such matters were worth little. In regard, therefore, to the purpose for which it was professedly called together the Congress must be considered a fiasco.[2] And yet the German Trade Unionist leaders declare that

[1] Germany	10
Austria	5
Bohemia	5
Hungary	10
Bulgaria	2
Switzerland	11
Sweden	5
Norway	2
Denmark	3
Holland	9
	62

[2] Der misslungene internationale Gewerkschaftskongress. . . . Der eigentliche Zweck der Veranstaltung, gewerkschaftliche Besprechung der durch den Krieg geschaffenen und auch den Krieg noch anhaltenden schwierigen Wirtschaftslage ist dadurch natürlich, trotz der Anwesenheit von 52 Delegierten [not counting the Swiss?] vereitelt worden (*Die Hilfe* for November 1, 1917, p. 669).

it was from their point of view a success.[1] They felt that a step had been made in the direction of reconstituting the international solidarity of Labour. As in the case of Stockholm, they believed that if only such international solidarity were reconstituted, they would have got a purchase by which they could break down the opposition in the working-classes of enemy countries to a *status quo* peace. The fact that the French and Italian Trade Unionists had been prevented from coming by the act of their Governments, and not by their own, enabled the Conference to send them a telegram of fraternal greetings.

The Conference was, naturally, dominated by the German, Austrian, and Hungarian delegates, who formed half the assembly. It was remarked how impatient the Germans were of criticism or opposition. The reading of the British letter, speaking plainly about the crimes of Germany, stung them into rage. It was answered by a tirade from the German delegate Bauer. The old charges against the English of cruelty in the Boer War, were once more brought out (which, whether true or not, are, at any rate, emphatically contradicted in the official history issued by the German Great General Staff—that by the way), and of course, the crime of trying to "starve Germany" (as the Germans in 1871 starved Paris) was given its place in the indictment. But if the letter made the Germans angry, they seem to have been made still angrier when a Swiss Socialist, Greulich, present at the Conference as a guest, presumed, in the course of a discussion, to criticize adversely the attitude to

[1] Legien, "Die Berner internationale Gewerkschaftskonferenz" in *Die Neue Zeit* for October 19; Jansson, "Die Berner Gewerkschaftskonferenz" in *Die Glocke* for October 20th.

the German Government which had marked the German Trade Unions during the war. According to the picturesque phrase of one present at the Conference, this "left the German delegates hissing like black pythons."

The question of shifting the central bureau of the International Federation to a neutral country was discussed. Legien reaffirmed in the name of the Germans that they had no objection on principle to the change, but since the British Trade Unions had represented it as equivalent to a vote of no confidence in Germany, the Germans would not consent to it till such time as confidence all round was restored, and that would be shown by the reconstruction of the International Federation and the coming together of an International Conference.

The Berne Conference had "fulfilled its purpose."[1]

[1] "Die Berner Konferenz hat ihren Zweck erfüllt" (Legien in *Die Neue Zeit*).

XXII

THE WÜRZBURG CONGRESS

The Congress assembles.

THE *Parteitag* of the old Social Democrat Party was held at Würzburg from Sunday, October 14, to Saturday, October 20, 1917. Through the elimination of the Independent Party, it had become possible at last to hold a *Parteitag* which represented at any rate the old Party throughout the Empire, in its own eyes the only legitimate embodiment of German Social Democracy. To this Congress there came 282 delegates from 258 constituencies. In addition to the delegates, 56 Members of the Reichstag attended, 9 members of the Directorate, and a certain number of permanent officials and newspaper editors. A large outside public was admitted to hear the proceedings of the first day, who numbered, it was calculated, some two thousand persons.

After introductory ceremonies, Ebert, the President of the Party, made the opening speech. He repeated the stock phrases about the people's desire for peace and the obstinacy of the enemy in rebuffing peace-offers. But he seized the occasion to attack the Pan-German propaganda as being in part to blame for the enemy's "will to victory." Then he set the key for the tone of the Congress in domestic policy by repeating against Michaelis the declaration of war he had uttered in the Reichstag and declaring that the parliamentarization of Germany must be carried through.

At the close of the Sunday meeting Ebert himself and Auer of Munich were elected to be chairmen for the Congress, which was to set about its proper labours next day.

The official reports.

On the Monday (October 15) Auer took the chair and Ebert presented the report of the Party Directorate. A summary of this report had been published by *Vorwärts* on September 12, and we have already glanced at its statistics for the light they throw upon the struggle between the new and the old Party. Braun, the treasurer of the Party, followed with a financial statement. From this it appeared that the subscriptions of members had fallen off by 80 per cent. during the years of the war, and that the Party Press had lost subscribers to the extent of 58 per cent. In the latter respect, however, one improvement had been revealed in the last quarterly report, the number of subscribers to the Socialist Press having risen again 11 per cent. from its lowest figure, an increase represented by an addition of 70,000 subscribers. Later on, in the course of the Conference, the Manager of *Vorwärts,* Richard Fischer, spoke pessimistically about the prospects of the Party Press. He predicted grave results from the Party split. Already large sections of the working-class, he said—especially the munition-workers—took in non-Socialist instead of Socialist papers.

The question of reunion.

The business of the *Parteitag* was to pronounce with final authority upon the questions which had been at issue within German Social Democracy during the years of war. There were two great questions. One concerned the relations between the two divided Socialist bodies —the possibility of reunion. The other concerned the relations of the Party to the Government. Had

the Reichstag Group done right since August 4, 1914, in voting war-credits? Ought it to vote war-credits in all circumstances in the future?

The first question, the possibility or impossibility of reunion, was discussed during the afternoon of Monday the 15th and the morning of Tuesday the 16th. The second question, that of war-credits, was discussed during the afternoon of Tuesday and the fourth day of the Congress, Wednesday the 17th.

The question of reunion was one of great practical urgency. It was quite plain that a divided Social Democracy could not bring that volume of force to bear which was essential, if the ideals of Socialism were to be carried through in Germany. When peace came, and the immensely complicated tasks of reconstruction had to be faced, Social Democracy would be relatively powerless, if the split continued—powerless just at the moment when it was of transcendent importance that it should be strong. Even utilitarian considerations, therefore—apart from sentiment—made it imperative to find an accommodation with the separated brethren—if it was possible to find an accommodation at all.

In the old Party the variety of attitudes with regard to the Independent movement was exhibited by different speakers. There were those on the Right who had nothing but condemnation for the Independents, and those on the Left, like Hüttmann and Heffter, whose own attitude approximated to that of the Independents and who tried to put their case in a favourable light. Hüttmann criticized adversely the manner in which the Party leaders had turned Kautsky out of the office of *Die Neue Zeit*. Heffter taxed the leaders with having acted unfairly all through towards the Minority, and he contrasted the

passivity they showed towards the extreme Right, Lensch and his like. "Nine-tenths of the Socialists at the front," he averred, "believe that the split was due to the intolerance of the Directorate."

Adolf Braund of Nüremberg, who has from the outset taken the foremost line in labouring for unity, for conciliation, for the sinking of differences, told the Congress that if the Parties failed to reunite, the masses would sooner or later take the matter into their own hands and insist that the breach should be closed. On the other hand, Kolb of Karlsruhe and Krätzig argued that where there was such real and fundamental disagreement, the division must be recognized as inevitable—a judgment which the considerations put forward in our concluding chapter will tend to confirm. The official leaders, Ebert, Braun (the treasurer), Molkenbuhr, Hermann Müller, were, as might have been expected, markedly hostile to the Independents.

The question of Alsace-Lorraine came up a good deal, since on this question, forming as it did one of the chief impediments to peace, the Independents had definitely taken up a different standpoint from that of the old Party. One speaker, Katzenstein of Stralsund, took his stand with the Independents, and advocated the *plébiscite;* there was no reason, he said, why the people of Alsace-Lorraine should not have the same right as any other people to determine their own destiny. Another speaker, Vetters of Giessen, wished the Party to modify its attitude in so far as to admit the retrocession to France of the small French-speaking frontier districts. The official leaders were adamant on the question. Scheidemann repeated the stereotyped affirmation that Alsace-Lorraine was German territory and that the principle of the right

of nations to determine their own destiny did not apply to the people of those countries, because they were not a nation. The integrity of the Empire was the Social Democrat condition for peace. Hermann Müller went farther and spoke sceptically of the principle itself. It would, he said, justify, among other things, the total dismemberment of Austria-Hungary! [It is interesting to notice the admission that if the nationalities under Habsburg sovereignty were given their free choice, they would choose total separation.] Germany could never give up Alsace-Lorraine, except after utter defeat. To secure the integrity of the Empire was the Social Democrat war-aim. As to a *plébiscite,* France would never consent to it, if the Germans who had migrated into the country since 1871 were allowed to vote. On the other hand, the Socialists of the old Party, Scheidemann said, demanded that Alsace-Lorraine should be given complete autonomy within the frame of the Empire. Similarly, other speakers protested against the proposal, which had been recently mooted, of annexing Alsace-Lorraine, in whole or in part, to Bavaria. Schmidt of Münich stated that such a measure was not desired by the Bavarian Socialists—or indeed by the Bavarian people as a whole.

Scheidemann spoke on the Monday afternoon. He dealt with the charge that the Party leaders had shown partiality in tolerating the extreme Right, whereas they had expelled the Minority. There was a difference between the two cases. In the case of the Imperialist Socialists there was only a divergence of opinion; in their political action they conformed to that prescribed by the Party as a whole; in the case of the Independents there had been schismatic action.

We have never suppressed an opinion, neither on the side of the Right nor on that of the Left. We believe firmly in the greatest liberty of opinion. But in *action* we demand Party solidarity. [Stormy applause.] Lensch and Peus and any one else may write whatever they please, but every one must conform to the resolutions of the Party in Congress and observe discipline.

Later on he showed where the reproaches of the Independents rankled:—

When we are reviled as "Government Socialists," I have never felt anger and resentment; I have felt only pity. What a petty and despicable mode of attack!—not ineffectual, I know, with the working-class. But the workers will find out some day what the truth is about our "pro-Government policy." If we have approached the Government, it has been only in order to safeguard the interests of workers, of soldiers and of their wives, and to rescue victims of the State of Siege. A future time will prove how many people we have happily been able to help—yes, how many we have actually saved from death ["Shame!"]. We have by deliberate purpose avoided doing anything which might disturb the unity of the Party. We will continue to avoid doing anything which may disturb the unity of the working-class. . . . We work on practical lines for peace and the vital interests of the German working-class. This the German working-class will come to recognize, and will refuse to pay any attention to those who make speeches with a show of "thorough," but who have actually *done* nothing for them. The German workers will again stand united in one great body, the undivided Social Democracy of Germany!

The debate on unity was terminated by the Congress passing, with only seven dissentient votes, a resolution proposed by Severing:—

Penetrated by the conviction that the Labour Movement can be successful and effectual only if its ranks are solid and united, the Congress aids and supports all efforts directed to-

wards the establishment of Party unity. In a Social Democrat Party, such unity, while the utmost tolerance is shown towards all differences of opinion, presupposes the subordination of the minority to the decisions of the majority. Whoever does not recognize these principles denies the very sources of the Party's life, which consist in the concentration of all forces in a single will and a single line of action. Hence all efforts to restore the unity of the Party must imply the demand that the majority-principle be accepted.

The Congress sees the best way to establish Party unity in the strengthening of the Social Democrat Party of Germany. It therefore calls upon the class-conscious workers of Germany to rally to it. The extension of its compact organization forms the surest guarantee that the arduous political struggles of the future will have an issue advantageous for the working-class.

A supplementary resolution was also adopted, calling upon the local branches and all individual members to strengthen the will to unity.

The question of voting war-credits.

The debate on the second great question before the Congress, that concerning the voting of war-credits, was opened on Tuesday afternoon by David. In this debate, too, the differences between the Right and Left within the old Party appeared no less than in the debate on unity. It will be remembered that the Antrick-Hoch section had refused since the end of 1914 to vote war-credits, although since they did not, like the Independents, vote against them, but only practised abstention, they remained attached to the old Party. In this debate Hoch himself moved a resolution, which did not in principle condemn the voting of war-credits by Socialists, but made such voting conditional upon the Government's having accepted unequivocally the Socialist demands for "no annexations" and for democratic reform. This the existing German Government had not done, and till it had done so, the resolution

asserted, it was the duty of the Social Democrat Group in the Reichstag to refuse to vote war-credits.

A contrary resolution was moved by Löbe of Breslau. This expressed approval of the policy which the Reichstag Group had hitherto pursued in voting war-credits. It stated that the German Government's reply to the Pope's note afforded an adequate basis for peace negotiations. But it called upon the Government to show greater promptitude and decision in repudiating all ideas of annexing Belgium, in establishing Alsace-Lorraine as an autonomous State within the Empire, in crushing the Pan-German propaganda, and in realizing the wish of the German people for democratic reform. In the last regard, the resolution specified the immediate establishment of equal suffrage in Prussia and the concession to the Reichstag of a greater measure of political control.

In his speech defending his resolution, Löbe urged that the Party should authorize its representatives in the Reichstag to cease voting war-credits, if they ever became convinced that the Government had made up its mind to seek annexations or to obstruct democratic reform.

To certain delegates of the Right even this conditional threat to refuse to vote was manifestly not altogether pleasing. Stolten of Hamburg contended that the policy of using the vote as a means of pressure upon the Government must cease the moment it prejudiced the safety of the nation. "Of course," said Cohen of Reuss, "we do not vote credits in all circumstances. But I can hardly imagine any situation at present in which we could refuse them."

Hoch's resolution was eventually rejected at the end of the Wednesday session by 258 votes to 25, and Löbe's was carried by 262 to 14.

On Thursday (October 18) the Congress came to the more general questions of future policy. It first discussed the question of "democratization" on the basis of a report drawn up by Landsberg. Scheidemann's speech in opening this discussion seems to have been the chief oratorical feat of the Congress. He talked in trumpet-tones of the strength in which organized German Social Democracy would stand before the Government after the war. Social Democracy in the new conditions must be prepared to modify its old attitude. It could no longer be a mere antagonist of the State; its task would be to conquer power within the State, eventually even to assume the responsibilities of government. For this purpose it must see to it that Germany was changed into a really democratic parliamentary State. He described the fearful conditions which the war would leave behind it. Even Social Democracy would not be able to bring men in a moment from hell into paradise. Yet the only hope for the world would be in practical, not a merely theoretical, Socialism. This implied that Germany must be democratized, must be made internally free.

"Democratization."

A strenuous popular will set towards freedom will be strong enough to secure peace as well—strong not by armaments. What is it that makes our main antagonist in this war, England, so strong, and what is our worst point of weakness? England has known how to win the friendship of all the world, and we have lost the friendship of all the world. ["Very true."] That must be otherwise. We are arming for a new struggle with England, a struggle not for the Flemish coast, but for the sympathy of the peoples, for the soul of the world. [Loud applause.]

The proposal was put forward by Pflüger of Stuttgart that the official statement of the programme of the

Party, drawn up twenty-three years before—a document which appeared to the present Majority long-winded and pedantic—should be superseded by a new statement in effective language which had some grip in it. This proposal was accepted by the Directorate, who promised to appoint a commission to draft a statement on these lines.

War and after-war problems.

On Friday (October 19) the financial problems of the immediate future and the time after the war were first discussed—how the burdens of taxation should be distributed, so that they should not weigh unfairly upon the workers. A report by Cunow was submitted to the Congress. Cunow made much of the trade war which he maintained England would carry on against Germany in the future: he advocated the now famous *Mittel-Europa* scheme as Germany's best defence.

"We have lost," said Löbe of Breslau, "hundreds of thousands of capable workmen; we shall have to take into account that hundreds of thousands of others will have their capacity for work very much reduced; we must expect a general lowering of vitality owing to bad nourishment. In these circumstances the supreme law of financial policy must be the sparing of human labour-power, the essential strength of our people. . . .

Our taxation proposals have been met by a howl from the capitalist Press, as if they meant the ruin of Germany. We must therefore insist that the proposals we have put forward are not specifically Social Democrat. Gothein, Professor Jaffé, and other bourgeois financial publicists, were before us in asking for taxes on property, extended death-duties, and States monopolies in large measure. How otherwise can the enormous costs of the war be covered? The hope of a war-indemnity grows ever more shadowy and the expenses and losses of the war mount higher and higher. The only way by which we can stave off a "hunger-peace," a "misery peace" is by stopping the game of the Jingoes

before they have quite brought Germany to destruction. A speedy peace affords the only possibility of saving us from burdens so heavy that the German people must break down altogether under them.

Various other social problems of the future were then discussed by different speakers, as to which a report had been drawn up by Wissell—agriculture and the production of foodstuffs, demobilization, female labour, infant welfare. Lensch clamored for a far-reaching colonial policy.

"Free Trade has in all probability been shattered into fragments by the war. . . . If Germany loses her colonies, her whole freedom of development will be imperilled." "What good will colonies be to us in the time of transition?" asked the following speaker, Jäckel of Berlin. "Whether and how far we shall need them later on it will be time enough to discuss later on."

Before the morning session closed, Scheidemann made a short speech in which he came back to the urgency of "democratization."

Away with all hindrances to democratization and parliamentary government in the Empire! The hindrance which calls most immediately for removal is the Imperial Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis. [Stormy applause.]

On the Thursday afternoon a number of resolutions were passed on the questions already debated, and the great and urgent question of the feeding of the people under war-conditions was discussed. Complaints were made of the Government's half-measures and delays. There were the usual denunciations of profiteers. Some of the speakers seem to have given a description of the prevalent distress in Germany, which was not

allowed to appear in the abridged report of the proceedings published by *Vorwärts*. In its leading article, at any rate, the following day (October 20) *Vorwärts* says:—

> The pictures of misery drawn by Comrade Schilling of Saxony [a woman speaker] were absolutely heartrending (*erschütternd*).

On Saturday morning (October 20), with Ebert in the chair, some resolutions on points connected with the working of the Party machinery were passed, and Ebert then, after a final speech, in which he summed up the position of the Party, declared the Würzburg Congress closed.

One change in the government of the Party which had been made at the Congress was that Scheidemann was elevated officially to a position alongside of Ebert. The two were henceforth to be joint-Presidents of the Party.

The result of the Congress.

The Würzburg *Parteitag* seems to have left the situation in Germany very much as it was before. It gave, no doubt, a feeling of exhilaration to the adherents of the old Party to meet all together in a great assembly which confirmed the official policy with something very near unanimity. Since the Social Democrats who disagreed with the policy of the old Party had practically all left it by this time, the unanimity of those still adhering to it was a foregone conclusion. The Congress can hardly be said to have brought out fresh arguments or assertions which were not already threadbare. It did nothing to bring the hope of reunion any nearer.

A few weeks after the conclusion of the Würzburg *Parteitag*, the Committee of the Independents (Haase,

Dittmann, Ledebour, Luise Zietz, and three others) promulgated their view of the matter in a Manifesto.

Counter-manifesto of the Independents.

This said that the Independents had always been fully alive to the importance of the Labour Movement preserving unity, and it was the leaders of the old Party who were to blame for the schism. They had deserted the principles of Socialism by (1) voting war-credits, (2) agreeing to co-operation with non-Socialist Parties, and (3) suppressing the opposition of the Minority. The Würzburg *Parteitag* had not only endorsed the policy of the old Party generally, but had sanctioned their violent seizure of Press organs, beginning with the case of *Vorwärts* and ending with that of the *Neue Zeit*. The old Party had, in fact, ceased to be Socialist at all in anything but outward profession. The only true Socialist party was the Independent party, and if the Socialist movement was ever again to be united, it could only be under the Independent banner.

On November 2 it was announced that Count Hertling had been appointed Chancellor of the German Empire in the place of Michaelis. At the time at which this was written[1] it is too soon to say whether his relations with the Social Democrat Party will be smoother than those of his ill-starred predecessor. His antecedents and previous political bent hardly mark him out as a Chancellor whom Socialists are likely to find congenial. When his name was first put forward in connection with the office, the Social Democrat Press did not regard it with favour. On the other hand, the circumstances of his accession to the office have shown a concession to the demand for parliamentarism

Hertling, Chancellor.

[1] November 1917.

unprecedented in the history of the German Empire. Count Hertling did not take office till after negotiations with all the Parties in the Reichstag, in which he gave assurances satisfactory to the majority. Although his previous utterances had made it appear that his own views differed widely from the programme adumbrated in the resolution of July 19, he had to give assurances, which were understood by the Parties composing the parliamentary *bloc*—including the old Socialist Party—to pledge him to accept that programme. Whether these Parties have again been imposed upon, whether Hertling will make any clearer statements on the subject of Belgium and annexations generally than Bethmann Hollweg or Michaelis, remains to be seen. In any case, never before has the accession of a Chancellor to office depended upon his obtaining a promise of support from the majority in the Reichstag. Besides this, the strong feeling aroused in the Reichstag against Helfferich caused him also to be relieved of his office of Vice-Chancellor on November 9, and he has been replaced by a veteran Radical parliamentarian, Herr von Payer, the leader of the united Progressive Parties in the Reichstag. All this does not constitute parliamentary government: it is only a step in that direction; future events may quite possibly make it nugatory, for the Conservatives are far from having given up the game. Yet a step in the direction of "parliamentarization" has been taken, and some of the credit for it can hardly be denied to the Social Democrats.

XXIII

SURVEY OF THE CONTROVERSY

WE have followed the leading events in the history of German Socialism from the outbreak of the Great War till the elevation of Count Hertling to the Chancellorship. In conclusion, we may survey the logic of the position maintained by each of the two main bodies into which German Socialism is at present divided.

With the Government, the old Social Democrat body—the Majority—has since the beginning of the war, apart from the brief spasm of hostility under the Michaelis *régime,* been on terms of intimacy and co-operation, which are something new in the history of German Socialism. It is this which has procured them from the Independent Socialists the opprobrious names of "Government Socialists" or "Dependent Socialists." It is undeniable that such subordination to the Government as has been exhibited by Social Democrats of the old Party during the war is quite contrary to the tradition of the Party before the war. How do these Socialists justify their change? There are two alternative lines of justification. One line is to say:—

The practice and principles of the Party before the war were *wrong.* In clinging to the letter of the Marxian doctrine we did not allow for the change of circumstances. The German working-class had grown

in power and prosperity, and this prosperity was bound up with the prosperity of the German State. It is no longer true in Germany that "the proletariat had nothing to lose but its chains." The time was come for us to assert ourselves as a Party in the State, accepting responsibilities in the State, and gaining our ends in the usual parliamentary way, by political tactics and compromises with other Parties. It was our interest not to overthrow the existing State, but to push our way more and more into its offices, and so gradually direct it to our own ends. As a matter of fact, the practice of the Party, even before the war, had largely been directed on these lines, but we still in our theories and verbal declarations kept up the old out-of-date intransigent attitude. There was a growing divergence between theory and practice. Those who say that in August 1914 we broke with our past and changed our course are right. But if the old course had come to be mistaken, there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. We have learnt by experience.

Those who take this line are the *Umlerner* in the full sense. They are largely, of course, identical with the Right wing of the Party, those who, before the war, were called Revisionists or Reformists. Kolb of Karlsruhe is one of their leading spokesmen.

The other line of argument is to say:—

Our principles and practice before the war were *right*. And there was no change of our principles in August 1914. If our practice changed, that was because the war created a wholly new situation. "We made good what we had always said." It had always been part of Socialist doctrine that if the country was involved in a non-aggressive war, a war of self-defence, it would be the duty of Social Democrats to do

all they could to help the State. There are authoritative utterances of the old leaders of our Party—Wilhelm Liebknecht, Bebel—to this effect. And this war is for Germany a war of self-defence. Therefore, we are perfectly true to our old professed principles in voting the money to the Government without which it could not carry on the war, and helping in every way we can to make the inner organization of the people under war-conditions efficient.

Everything, it will be seen, for this argument turns upon a question of fact, Is the war really a war of self-defence or a war of aggression?

When now we turn to the attitude of the Independents, we find, just in the same way, that there are two lines of justification for refusal to vote credits and general antagonism to the German Government. One runs:—

We recognize fully the duty of every citizen to help the State, by fighting or by voting money, if the country has to engage in a war of self-defence. But this war is not for Germany a war of self-defence. If some share of the blame attaches to all the belligerents, in so far as they all are capitalist States and uphold a form of society which naturally leads to international conflicts, still much the greatest share of blame falls upon Germany and Austria. This is shown by a study of the events leading up to the war —both those of years farther back, such as the provocative increase of the German fleet, and those of the fatal twelve days in 1914, the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, Germany's refusal of a conference, the outrageous invasion of Belgium. It is true that the doctrine of our old leaders was that in a defensive war the Socialist would help the State, but it was no less a recognized doctrine of Socialism that if any country

entered upon an aggressive war, the Socialists of that country should oppose the Government by all means in their power and call upon the proletariat to paralyse the Government's arm by strikes and passive or active resistance. Germany in this war is an aggressor; therefore we who oppose the German Government alone are faithful to the principles of International Socialism.

'Again here everything turns upon the question of fact, Is the war really a war of self-defence or a war of aggression?

The other line of argument runs thus:—

Since all Governments at present are capitalist Governments, and war is the inevitable outcome of the capitalist order of society, no Socialist can consistently take upon himself any share in furthering a war-policy, even if the war be a defensive one. A Socialist will indeed, in such a case, fight as a soldier and do his duty in repelling the foreign enemy, but he will never vote money to the Government. The soldier is not responsible for the orders given him by the State authorities; but the citizen who votes money, or co-operates politically with the Government, takes upon him his share of responsibility for the Government action. The social ills of mankind can never be cured except by the establishment of the Socialist order, involving a solidarity of the working-class in all countries. To labour for the establishment of this order is the supreme duty. It is a duty which overrides the duty of a man to his particular nation. For a man to take any part in furthering a war-policy, for the sake of his particular nation, must hinder the coming of the international Socialist order, and therefore it is to set the lower claim above the higher. If, in consequence of the abstention of Socialists, their

particular country is defeated by a foreign aggressor, that is a lesser evil than anything which hinders the coming of Socialism.

We may tabulate the four views in syllogistic form:

A.	B.
Socialists ought always to support their State in a war:	Socialists ought to support their States in a defensive war, but oppose it in an aggressive war:
This is a war:	This is for Germany a defensive war:
Therefore German Socialists ought now to support the German State.	Therefore German Socialists ought now to support the German State.

C.	D.
Socialists ought to support their State in a defensive war, but oppose it in an aggressive war:	Socialists ought always (till the coming of the Socialist order) to oppose their State in a war:
This is for Germany an aggressive war:	This is a war:
Therefore German Socialists ought now to oppose the German State.	Therefore German Socialists ought now to oppose the German State.

It will be seen that A and B disagree in their principle but agree in their conclusion; B and C agree in their principle but disagree as to the question of fact; C and D disagree in their principle but agree in their conclusion; A and D disagree in their principle, but agree in their minor premise, in so far as for both the question whether the war is defensive or aggressive is eliminated as irrelevant.

It is this complication of the issues which brings a good deal of confusion into the controversy between

the two German Socialist Parties. It is of course the conclusion of each line of thought which indicates the course to be taken by practice, and it is by agreement or disagreement in practice that politicians are grouped in Parties. Any number of men who are willing to support each other by co-operating on the same practical programme may form one Party, even if they have arrived at the same programme by different paths. The people, therefore, whose views are represented by A and B form one Party, the Majority Social Democrat Party, as against the Independent Social Democrat Party, which combines C and D.

But it must not be thought that the several positions are really marked off as sharply in psychological fact as we have marked them off for the purposes of logical explanation. It is inevitable that since Group A and Group B are mingled together in a single organization and are, day after day, working together at the same tasks, the theoretical differences between them become blurred. The men of each group in different degrees absorb the ideas of the other; in many minds, which have no great capacity for clear logical thinking, the two lines of thought run together so confusedly that it would be impossible to classify them either A or B. The same is true of C and D. The effect of practical union and co-operation is thus to draw B towards A and to draw C towards D. On the other hand, there are tendencies working the other way, impelling B towards C. B and C have, we saw, a common theoretical basis. And the same pressure of circumstances which induces large numbers of the members of the Majority actually to go over to the Independents, is always acting upon those individuals in the old Party who are nearer to the Independents,

even while they remain in the old Party. All this makes a kind of intellectual fog in which misapprehension is easy and sophistry has its chance.

It would appear that so far as the Independent Party is guided by a conscious theory, it adheres rather to position C than to position D. The bulk of the Party recognizes the duty of the Socialist to support the State in a war of self-defence. Most of those in Germany who assert on principle that in *no* war ought Socialists to vote credits belong, not to the Independent Party, but to one of the more extreme sections which follow Borchardt or Karl Liebknecht. Yet, although the question of fact thus becomes the real dividing question between the Independent leaders and the most central section of the old Party, it is not actually given in controversy the same prominence as the question of principle. That is to say, in most of the written controversy conducted by the Independents against the old Party, they talk as if all the old Party adhered to position A, and in most of the controversy conducted by the old Party against the Independents, they talk as if all the Independents adhered to position D. This is what was meant by the writer of the letter in *Die Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (see pp. 97, 98), when he says that the controversy on both sides largely strikes wide, because the real question at issue is kept out of sight.

The chief reason why this crucial question is so little discussed is apparently to be found in the constraint exercised upon the two Parties from outside, in the rigorous Government censorship and suppression. The question whether the war is for Germany an aggressive or a defensive one involves two inquiries. One is historical, an inquiry into the whole body of

facts connected with Germany's policy before the war —including the crowded diplomatic and military events of the Twelve Days—a matter which cannot be adequately treated without the precise and dispassionate study and valuation of a large number of documents; the other is political, an inquiry into the actual policy which Germany has in view, the war-aims for which she is fighting, the terms on which she would be prepared to conclude peace. Whatever be the origin of the war, if Germany is shown to be fighting for terms which are incompatible with the Socialist conception of international justice, then the war could not be, for a consistent Socialist, a defensive war in the moral sense. Now, both these questions—that of the origin of the war and that of war-aims —are questions on which the German Government jealously restricts discussion. Till the summer of 1916 the public discussion of war-aims was altogether forbidden in Germany; since then it has been permitted in a one-sided way; the Pan-Germans seem to be allowed every liberty for their propaganda, whilst the official gag prevents the Independents from publicly advocating such terms as they outlined at Stockholm. On the origin of the war a number of would-be historical studies have been published in Germany, the conclusion of which is wholly favourable to Germany. Yet apparently only one of them—that of Ludwig Bergstrasser—can make any claim to deal critically with the evidence. When one considers the reputation which Germany once had for thoroughness and impartiality in research, one may well be astonished at the thinness and one-sidedness of what purport to be expositions of the events leading up to the war put forth by professional historians such as Oncken, Schiemann, Helmolt, and Haller—to say

nothing of scrappy polemical pamphlets by Helfferich or the Social Democrat David. There seems to be no treatment of the evidence in Germany which can be put, for closeness of study and judicial temper, beside Mr. J. W. Headlam's "History of Twelve Days" and his articles examining the data (such as the Suchomlinoff "revelations"), which have subsequently appeared. When Germans are led by their studies to results unfavourable to the German Government, and wish to publish their conclusions, they have to do so outside Germany, as in the case of Hermann Fernau and the anonymous author of "J'Accuse." It is true, of course, that in any belligerent country, whilst the war lasts, restrictions are put by the Government upon the publication in print of opinions adverse to the cause for which the nation is fighting. Probably as large latitude had till recently been given in Great Britain as anywhere. Yet, even with the restrictions existing in Germany, one would think that something more substantial, something with a little more appearance of impartiality, might have been produced by the German historians, if Germany had had a case which was even plausible.

In any case, the result of these restrictions has been that, while for many of the Independent leaders, the crucial question has been the "Question of Guilt" (*Schuldfrage*), because it is the answer to this question which for them proves that Germany's war is an aggressive one, this is just the question as to which they are not allowed to give a free and full exposition of the facts as they see them. Many false statements made on the other side have to go unchallenged. In default of being allowed to argue the question of fact, the Independents are driven to shift the controversy on to the ground of principle, and argue, either as if

all their opponents of the old Party held position A, and were for supporting the national Government, even in an unrighteous war ("My country, right or wrong") or as if they themselves held position D, and condemned co-operation with the Government even in a righteous war.

To some extent they are justified in attacking the old Party on the question of principle. There are many, as we have seen, in the old Party who frankly repudiate the traditional principles of Social Democracy, who co-operate with the Government, not because Germany is engaged in a war of self-defence, or not for that reason only, but because they believe that the time has come for the Social Democrats to work, like other Parties, by arrangements with the Government. So far, the Independents may truly claim that it is they who are faithful to the Party tradition. Here the *Umlerner* closes with them and argues for a flexible and intelligent adaptation to changing circumstances as against a rigid mechanical adherence to tradition, a riding of abstract principles to death (*Prinzipienreiterei*), a doctrinaire blindness. This is one of the stock themes in the arguments against the Independents. The trouble is that it really applies only to those among the Independents who hold position D. If, under the stress of war, many of the old Party have repudiated the traditional revolutionary policy in favour of a policy of co-operation in the State, there are also, we must remember, among the Independents those who before the war desired to move in the direction of co-operation—Bernstein, for instance. It is not a question of principle, but of fact, which separates position C from position B.

Those on the Right of the old Party are, we may repeat, divided from the Independents in principle.

An utterance of Wolfgang Heine's[1] is quoted in the *Bremer Bürger-Zeitung* for May 1, 1916:—

> Even if the present German Government bore the sole guilt for the war; even if—as our enemies allege—it had let slip the dogs of war with the purpose of subjugating Europe, *even so we could not act in a manner different from that in which we have done.*

If this is not subscribing to the principle "My country, right or wrong," what is? And other utterances of Heine and those like him imply the same standpoint. Nor is this attitude on the part of the German Socialist Right a new thing in this war. Heine has recently reprinted utterances of his own at the Stuttgart International Socialist Congress of 1907, to prove that he put forward such views as far back as that, and he claims that his statements *met with no protest anywhere in the Social Democrat Party:*—

> The fight against military arrogance, etc. . . . is one of the tasks of national civilization. The consciousness of this does not discharge us from the duty of defending German civilization, if it is menaced by outside enemies. And it is true that in such an event it is hardly possible to enter upon nice distinctions between aggressive and defensive wars. That question may be pretty hard to decide and is certain in any case to be a debatable one. But there will never be any difficulty in making out clearly whether *Germany is in danger*. . . . If it is ever a case of the German nation being imperilled, we [Socialists] cannot take the line of refusing to repel this peril because we have not provoked it. . . . We must not let the German people and German civilization suffer for it, because the ruling classes of Germany have brought them into danger. We, too, should have to take up arms, not in order to secure the power of the Government

[1]Heine is a successful lawyer, who joined the Socialist body only when well on in life. He has been during the war one of the principal spokesmen of the Right wing.

and the ruling classes, but on behalf of our people and its best possessions; that would be the real gain of the conflict, even if once more, as usual, the rulers knew how to gather in for themselves the immediate profits of the military repulse of the enemy. This is the only possible policy. In peace-time, yes, it is our task to work for peace. . . . But if, in spite of our efforts, war comes, then the people, with its frontiers, its possessions, its security, and its freedom menaced, could not tolerate our embarking on elaborate considerations and arguing backwards and forwards as to who bore the guilt for the war.[1]

The material welfare of the German working-class is spoken of as the consideration overriding every other for the German Socialist in the event of war. It is quite obvious that when once the German State is involved in a war, whether a just war or an unjust one, defeat must spell material loss of some kind, the burden of which will fall in greater or less measure upon the German working-class. One cannot get away from the law written broadly over history—*Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.* When a German Socialist argues: "Defeat would mean such and such privations, which would be felt in every German working-class home," the fact, if true at all, is true quite apart from the moral character of the war. If he goes on to infer "Therefore I am bound to do all I can to help the German State to victory," that is, in effect, to treat the moral character of the war as irrelevant for practical policy.[2] You cannot accept

[1] Quoted by Heine in the *Süddeutsche Monatschefte,* March 1915, and reprinted in Heine's collected war articles, *Zur Deutschlands Erneuerung* (1916), p. 34.

[2] Cunow notes as a feature of the present phase of working-class opinion in Germany an aversion from all theory:—

"Anybody who to-day talks about theoretical questions with intelligent working-men, even with such as were formerly

both principles as valid for a Socialist: "Act in such a way that the working-class of your own nation may suffer least loss," and "Act according to the character of the war, according as it is just or unjust"; for the two principles conflict. If you accept the first, you definitely put the national point of view above the moral. A German Socialist who accepts the first has no ground for censuring the Socialists of enemy countries if they too do all they can to help their respective nations to victory. And sometimes a German Majority Socialist is logical enough to admit this:—

Vorwärts says that we, the Social Democrats of the Majority, have no right to reproach French Socialists for supporting their Government. We don't reproach them on that score; on the contrary, we respect their patriotism, and it is just we of the Majority, who have supported *our* country in its hour of need, who are qualified to understand the standpoint of the French Socialists and to deal with them—not those who, like the Minority, have left their German Fatherland in the lurch in the hour of its increasing danger (Wolfgang Heine in the *Internationale Korrespondenz,* quoted in the *Frankfurter Zeitung,* February 3, 1916, 2nd edition).

This, if you accept the national consideration as the decisive one, is quite consistent: Every Socialist is right in supporting his country in a war: therefore

keenly interested in discussions of this kind, only too often gets the answer, 'Hardly one of the things which our theoretical authorities prophesied to us as the certain consequences of a world-war has come true; almost everything has turned out quite different. But what is the good of a theory if it cannot foresee, and only proves to you twenty or thirty years after the event that everything happened as it was bound to happen? Better leave all theory aside and just go in for practical work.'" (*Die Neue Zeit* for December 28, 1918, p. 294).

we German Socialists are right in voting money to the German Government, and the French Socialists are right in voting money to the French Government. When, however, German Socialists who take this view argue that the Independents are inconsistent because they censure German Socialists for voting war-credits and excuse the action of French Socialists for doing the same thing, this is false. For the Independents do *not* accept the national consideration as the predominant one. They make everything turn upon the moral character of the war. Therefore the German Socialists, in voting war-credits, and the French Socialists in voting war-credits are *not* doing the same thing. The German Socialists are voting money to carry on an aggressive war, and the French Socialists are voting money to carry on a mainly defensive war. There is, therefore, no inconsistency at all, from the Independent standpoint, in censuring the German Socialists and relatively justifying the French Socialists.

One must say a "mainly" defensive war, because the Independents would not admit, probably, that the war for the French was purely defensive. The Independents, as we have seen, in the question of Alsace-Lorraine, stand for the *plébiscite* solution; and though this has apparently now been accepted by a large part of the French Socialists, the French Government still repudiates it. The purpose of the French Government is apparently to conquer back Alsace-Lorraine, without a *plébiscite;* this would, from the point of view of the German Independents, import an aggressive element into the French warfare. On the other hand, in proportion as the German action in the inception of the war was aggressive, to that extent the French action is regarded by the German Independents as defensive.

Or again, if the Independents choose the second

of the two principles stated above—"Act according to the character of the war, according as it is just or unjust"—they must be prepared to forego the first of the two principles, "Act in such a way that the working-class of your own nation may suffer least loss." That is to say, the Independents must be prepared to say: "We are advocating a policy by which we know that the working-class of our own country will suffer losses, which it would not suffer if the alternative policy were successfully carried through." This is a hard saying, and I do not know that the Independents quite face it. It gives the Majority the chance of an effective thrust in argument. They have only to depict the consequences of a German defeat—the poverty and social misery which would follow it—and press the question upon the Independents: "Are you prepared to advocate a policy which leads to this rather than a policy which makes the victory of the German State the dominant consideration?" It would require almost superhuman moral courage on the part of the Independents to answer by a plain "Yes." They try to escape the dilemma by arguing that, as a matter of fact, the policy of the Majority would not lead to victory; victory in this war is impossible for either side. If they once admitted that victory was possible for Germany, they would be fast-held to the necessity of making a choice between the dreadful alternatives of helping to victory a cause which they believed to be unjust or of advocating the policy which they believed to entail the heavier loss for the German people. One understands, therefore, why they fervently repeat on every occasion that victory is impossible, that in this war "there can be neither victors nor vanquished."

By pressing this question, the Majority thus force the Minority from the ground of principle to the ground of fact—whether victory is possible for Germany. This is not a question which can be answered by applying any Socialist principles, but only by an estimate of the actual military situation and the resources on either side. And as to those matters, the Majority may say with some appearance of reason that Hindenburg and Capelle are better judges than Haase or Bernstein.

So far the Majority may seem to score in argument. From a standpoint outside Germany, no doubt the Majority seem wrong and the Minority right on the question whether a German victory is possible (most of us in England believe that a decisive defeat of Germany is not only possible but probable, if we persist), but we must bear in mind that the situation cannot but look different to those for whom the German General Staff is the supreme authority on military facts. If one occupying an outside standpoint may here throw in a criticism of the German domestic controversy, I should ask whether the Majority can show that a German victory (if they discard indemnities) could now diminish, to any appreciable extent, the poverty and social misery they forecast in the event of a German defeat. The economic welfare of Germany in the time after the war will not depend on whether they retain or lose Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian Poland, but on whether they can build up again their trade with the rest of the world. And an issue of the war which left Germany in possession of Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian Poland might quite conceivably make it harder for Germany to restore her foreign trade than an issue which was a clear German defeat. But of that this is not the place to speak further.

There is also another way in which the Minority Socialists since the beginning of the war have tried to get out of the dilemma. They plead that by voting against war-credits they are not impeding the national defence, because, as a matter of fact, their vote, as that of a Minority in the Reichstag, will have no practical effect. It will serve as a protest which relieves them of responsibility, but will not cause a single soldier less to be equipped and moved to the frontier. One must allow that this argument is sophistical. It is easy for the advocates of the Majority to triumph over it. In the cruel dilemma in which the Minority are placed, between their love of their country and their love of international justice, every excuse must be made for them. And yet, one must regret that they should ever adopt a line of defence which can only injure their case by its palpable weakness.

We have noticed the consistency of certain utterances of Heine, which imply that the national consideration ought to be the determining one with a Socialist and which justify the French Socialists for supporting their Government. But, although logically, if the supremacy of the national consideration were once established, this by itself would give a perfectly adequate justification to the action of the German Majority—as in position A—no German Socialist would actually feel happy and comfortable if he had his stand upon the national consideration alone. To give him the feeling of moral security, he has to buttress the national consideration by borrowing the minor premise of position B. He has to assert that, although, even if the war were an unjust one, it would still be his duty to help his Fatherland to victory, as a matter of fact, the war is a defensive one for

Germany. In the same article of Heine's in which the passage justifying the French Socialists quoted above is to be found he writes a little lower down: "The German Social Democrats know that they are waging a war of *defence,* while the French, by aiming at the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine, are actually waging a war of *conquest.*" For this reason, it would probably be difficult to find position A represented in its purity among German Majority Socialists. Those whose attitude seems, when analysed to its psychological basis, to be A—like Heine's—habitually oscillate in argument between A and B.

It appears, then, that the old Party and the Independents are divided by a real difference of belief—either on a matter of principle or on a matter of fact—which issues in different modes of action. If such be the case, it is hopeless to think that Party unity could have been maintained, or could be restored, without a radical conversion of either one side or the other. The reproaches which the Majority direct against the Independents for disrupting the Party and the reproaches which the Independents direct against the authorities of the old Party for insisting upon conformity of action within the Party, seem both equally unreasonable.

It is the favourite argument on the Majority side that while complete liberty of *opinion* is allowed in the Party, all Comrades are bound in their *action* to follow the decisions of the constituted authorities—of the Directorate or of the Majority of the Reichstag Group, as the case may be. Without such loyal subordination of individual opinion to discipline, they say, the Party could not continue; and they demonstrate this fairly obvious point circumstantially. But it is equally obvious that the subordination of individual

opinion can only be justly demanded when the disagreement does not concern a fundamental matter. Where a major disagreement is in question, for the individual to act contrary to his opinion may well be disloyalty to a higher cause than that of Party unity. In the case, therefore, of a major disagreement, there is nothing for it but that the dissentients should separate. And the disagreement of the Majority and Minority as to the war was disagreement on the foremost issue of the day. "That is all very well," certain members of the Majority are disposed to say. "We admit that in the circumstances the Majority and Minority could not act together. But the Minority might have withdrawn noiselessly; they need not have tried to split the Party by propagating their own views." But this, again, is not reasonable. From the standpoint of the Minority, they are bound to propagate their views. If what they believe is true, it is they, and not the old Party, who are faithful to the cause of Socialism; loyalty to that cause and regard for the greatest good of men lays an obligation upon them to propagate their views. The Majority may reasonably try to demonstrate to them that their views are wrong, but they cannot reasonably suggest to them that they should hold their views and be silent.

It seems equally unreasonable on the side of the Minority to make it a grievance that the Party authorities did not tolerate their remaining in the Party and taking divergent action. Their contention that the competence to expel them or determine their action was vested only in a *Parteitag,* not in the Directorate of the Party or in the Reichstag Group, may have been quite correct according to the letter of the Party Constitution, but was impossibly doctrinaire in the

circumstances. The constitution was not framed for the emergency of a war, and it would be wholly unreasonable to expect the Party leaders at such a crisis to tolerate action within the Party, which thwarted the policy of the Party, because the Constitution, as it stood, did not happen to give them the requisite powers. From their standpoint they were plainly bound to assume to themselves the powers necessary to hold the Party together and wait for the future *Parteitag* to justify them retrospectively. If what they believed was true, they could not have acted with greater forbearance without failing in their duty to the Party and to the Fatherland.

If the case is as we have stated, a division of the Party was absolutely inevitable if each side acted according to its beliefs. We may blame, if we will, one side or the other for having the beliefs that they do have, or we may question whether they sincerely believe the things they profess to believe, but if we regard their beliefs as honest beliefs, it is difficult to see where either side was to blame in the series of actions which led to the Party split. And while the beliefs on either side remain what they are, it is difficult to see how the maximum of goodwill on both sides could restore unity.

It seems evident that, when all is said and done, the old Party has moments of discomfort, as they go on time after time voting credits for the German war. They still want to feel that they, as Social Democrats, faithful to their principles, are essentially the party of peace. In this respect it is not pleasant for them to be outdone by the Independents, who refuse to vote credits. The speakers and writers of the Majority, therefore, lose no opportunity to protest with passionate re-iteration that they desire peace, that Germany,

as represented by the Reichstag, desires peace, that it is the enemy who repels with contumely every offer of peace. This sounds edifying; it is, of course, in reality absolutely empty of significance. That is to say, it is either not true or it is a truism. If it meant that the Majority Socialists were ready to accept peace at any price and the enemy persisted nevertheless in fighting, because he loved war in itself, it would not be true. If it means that the Majority Socialists are ready to make peace on the terms they think fair, but the enemy is not willing to make peace on those terms, it is no doubt true enough, but it is hardly worth saying. It is true of all the belligerents, without distinction, that they desire peace on the terms they think fair, even the Pan-Germans, or the extreme Jingoes on the side of the Entente—unless there are people inhuman enough to prefer that the carnage should go on because it brings them individual profit—desire peace on the terms they think fair. The desire for peace in itself is something which may be taken for granted in any man with the least vestige of feeling or intelligence. It is all a question of the terms. If the statesmen on our side have refused to enter into conversation as to the terms at this stage, that is because the Germans have made it perfectly clear from their side that they are not willing to consider the terms which we think fair, and conversations, while this is so, would be worse than a waste of time.

If the Majority German Socialists expressed what they really mean, they would probably say: "The terms we desire are fair ones, but the terms the enemy desires are not." That would be a proposition of some import, but it would also be so highly controversial a one that it would not serve so well to tranquillize the Socialist conscience as a continual asseveration of the

undoubted fact that they desire peace. The German Majority Socialists, as we have seen, consider that a return to the *status quo* of July 1914 would constitute a peace on fair terms. One at any rate of them, Paul Lensch, has incidentally explained (see pp. 210, 211) that this would mean a complete triumph for Germany and would spell for England, France, and Italy the beginning of ruin. We do not consider these terms fair ones. . . .

In examining the arguments used by Majority and Minority in their controversy, we must not forget that the adherence of men to one Party or the other is largely determined by other causes than logic. It is likely enough that, as a Majority writer says, the great mass of those who, during the past year, have passed from the Majority to the Independents, have cared little about the principles for which the Independent leaders contend with such zeal.

The war, which by the first calculations was to last at most five or six months, dragged on and on. The trench-warfare set in. One State after another was sucked into the vortex. Hence the sacrifices in killed, in wounded, in maimed, mounted up; so did the sufferings which the war soon imposed upon every family, upon some families in crushing volume; so did the privations in the country itself, in consequence of the deficiency of foodstuffs, which made itself more and more painfully felt, aggravated by the faulty State-organization. Under this combined assault of bodily and mental anguish, which gnawed ever farther in consequence of the abiding anxiety as to the life of friends and relations out in the field and as to the daily bread, the original Socialist feeling of great masses of people could not hold out permanently. The former relation between the leaders and the masses was reversed. That section among the leaders who had gone off antecedently on a line of their own now gained a considerable number of new adherents; at the same time, the new adherents more and more got the conduct of things

into their hands and traced a particular course for the actions of the Opposition. What had originally been nothing more than a doctrinaire revolt, now acquired the character of a mass-movement driven forward by instinct rather than by any clear understanding. Thereby the import of the opposition movement became different; the leaders in the meantime had long left their first track, in order to reduce their opposition to a sort of system which aimed at more than the stopping of the war, at the stopping of war altogether, whilst what the mass of the people craved was just peace as soon as possible—that, no more and no less, a cessation of the anguish which the war had brought upon them. . . .

It is not true that the masses are torn asunder by profound disagreements in principle, by different fundamental conceptions. . . . The masses, for the most part, have no knowledge of theoretical disagreements, and for that reason feel no interest in all the Party controversy as such. . . . *The Party controversy is carried on almost entirely by the leaders.* . . . What the masses want is peace; they want peace immediately, and since they largely believe that they can get it only by fighting against their own Government, and this fight does not seem to them to be carried on energetically enough by the Old Social Democrat Party, they either desert the Party altogether, grumbling and dissatisfied, or they range themselves with those who, it seems to them, are carrying on this fight more relentlessly and who make them the biggest promises—the Independent Party. What brings adherents to the Independents is the general embitterment.[1]

This is the testimony of a member of the Majority, but one may believe that it is not far from the truth.

[1] Karl Wendemuth in *Die Neue Zeit* for November 9, 1917.

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